



THE MARTYRS' ISLE

BY
ANNIE SHARMAN



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LIST OF VESSELS.

JOHN WILLIAMS (steamship)	{	IN THE
NIUE (lugger)		SOUTH SEAS
HANAMOA (cutter)		AND
And many Whale Boats used by Missionaries and Native Teachers.					NEW GUINEA.
MORNING STAR (steel lifeboat)	..	..	..	{	ON LAKE
MARDIE (Berhampur) and TARA (Calcutta)	..	..	..		TANGANYIKA
GOSPEL BOAT (Amoy)	..	..	..		IN INDIA.
					IN CHINA.

THE MARTYRS' ISLE



GROUP OF GIRLS IN MISS CRAVEN'S HOME. AT PLAY!

[Frontispiece.]

THE MARTYRS' ISLE

or Madagascar : The Country, the People,
and the Missions

BY
ANNIE SHARMAN
(L.M.S., ANTANANARIVO)

WITH EIGHTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS

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CHAPTER I

THE THIRD LARGEST ISLAND IN THE WORLD—WHAT IS ITS NAME ?

HOW many of my readers, I wonder, know which is the third largest island in the world ? Many have learnt that New Guinea is the largest, but it is surprising how few boys and girls know which is the second and which the third in size.

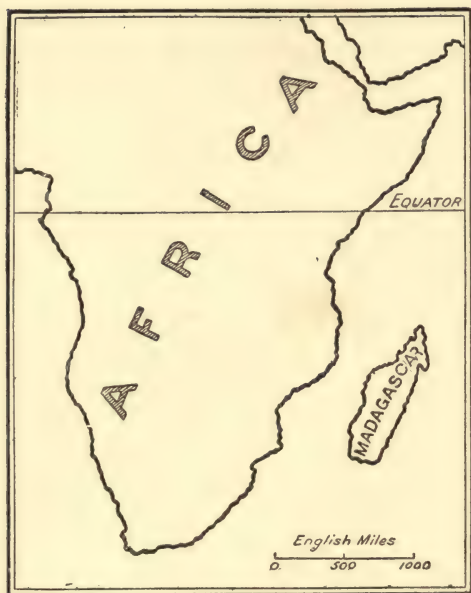
If you look at the map on the next page, you will see to the south-east of Africa an island called MADAGASCAR. I dare say some will think, “ I *am* astonished if that really is the third largest island in the whole world, for it looks quite small ! ” But you know that if you walk out beside father, you do not feel as tall and big yourself as if you walk with a younger brother who is just a little shorter than you are. And so, for the same reason, because you are looking at Madagascar beside *her* father, the great continent of Africa, she does look rather small. If, however, you put a map of Madagascar beside one of your own country, you will at once discover how large an island it is, for it is *four times* the size of England and Wales.

In the old days the people of Madagascar called their island home “ *Izao rehetra izao*,” which means “ the whole world.” So you see they thought much of their country. But since the missionaries went out to teach the people, some of the boys and girls have learnt geo-

graphy at school, and now they know that though they do live on one of the largest islands in the world, it is not "the whole world."

The natives of Madagascar are called *Malagasy*, and they are a most interesting people. I have often heard English men and women say, "When I was a boy (or "When I was a girl") no story pleased

me so much as the one I read about the Malagasy Christians." Therefore, I should like you to read this little book right through, because you will find much in it about these people; and, perhaps, before you reach the end, you may have learnt to love them as your fathers and grandfathers do, to say nothing of your mothers and grandmothers.



THE ISLAND AND THE CONTINENT.

But you will first like to hear a little about the country itself, for it is in nearly every way so differ-

ent from your own. As the ship carries us nearer and nearer we think what a lovely country Madagascar is, for though the coast is very flat, many beautiful trees and shrubs are seen growing there, which give it quite a picturesque appearance.

By and by we reach our port, Tamatave, on the eastern coast, and here we are glad to say "Good-bye" to the captain of the ship

and to find after a long voyage that we have at last reached this "great African island."

Many of the missionaries live in the centre of the country, and in travelling there to join them, we must pass through thick forests, cross rivers swarming with crocodiles, and traverse high mountains, until we ultimately reach the capital, which has a very long name—An-tá-ná-ná-ri-vo—meaning "the town of a thousand."

Madagascar is a very hot country, but as the central part of the island is much higher than Snowdon, it is cooler than the coast and other parts. The missionary living here is very glad, because he not only keeps healthier, but can also do more work on that account. This part of the country, too, is more thickly populated than any other part. So you can see how wise it is to have missionaries stationed here.

Our days in Madagascar are not in the least like English ones. In England people talk of "long days" and "short ones," meaning the long, lovely summer days, or the short and sometimes gloomy winter ones; but in Madagascar the days are nearly all alike. It is always light at six o'clock in the morning, and usually dark between six and half-past in the evening. This is very monotonous, and the missionaries often wish for the English summer evenings. On the other hand, we rarely have dull days, but the weather is bright and sunny nearly all the year round.

Another thing we miss in Madagascar is the gladsome season of spring, in which, I am sure, all English boys and girls delight. We have only two seasons—a hot one and a cool one; the former lasts eight or nine months, and the cool one for three or four. Spring and autumn are, as it were, skipped over in our country; we pass from

the hot season to the cold one in a very few days. When we hear people grumbling about the dull, dreary winter in England, we who live far away think it would be quite worth while to have a winter if we got the beautiful autumn at one end and the glorious spring at



"TRAVELLER'S" OR "BUILDER'S TREE."

the other.

In travelling up to Antananarivo we pass through the luxuriant forest with tall, tropical trees—the graceful bamboo, tree-fern, india-rubber, the ebony, "traveller's" or "builder's" tree, and many others.

The traveller's tree is specially interesting, and it quite deserves its name. If pierced at the base of the leaf-stalk, clear, pure water streams forth, which is most acceptable to the weary traveller. Every part of the tree is useful in the putting up of native huts, hence this remarkable tree is sometimes called the "builder's tree." We sometimes meet with villages where all the houses are made almost entirely from this particular tree, not even a nail being used. Parts of the long leaves form primitive plates for the people of the forest, so that you can easily see that the traveller's tree is indeed a very wonderful one.

Lovely flowers grow in the forest, and orchids of many varieties abound. The ferns and mosses are simply exquisite, and trailing plants and creepers form graceful festoons in every direction.



HOUSE BUILT FROM TRAVELLER'S TREE.

One naturally associates wild beasts and snakes with a forest, and boys will eagerly anticipate stories of adventure with lions, tigers,

leopards, elephants and other animals; but I am sorry, for their sakes, to have nothing so exciting to tell, because, strange to say, these creatures are not found in any part of the island.

I shall atone for not telling of thrilling adventure by introducing an animal to you which is only found in very few countries, indeed

this particular species is not found anywhere else in the world.

We have in Madagascar a very pretty animal which is called the lemur. There are various varieties, some being quite small, reminding one of a playful little monkey, whilst others are much larger. In speaking to me of the latter kind, a gentleman said: "I was about to shoot one of these large lemurs for my dinner, but when I came face to face with it I could not, for it looked so much like a brother."



AYE-AYE.

Lemurs play about in the trees, and are very shy, running away on the approach of man. Their cry is rather like that of a child in distress, and I have sometimes stood still to listen whether the sound were not human—the wail of some one needing help.

The animal you would, probably, most enjoy seeing is called the *aye-aye* (pronounced like "I-I"). You would be obliged to travel to Madagascar if you wished to see it "At Home," for, as I said above, this particular species of lemur does not live in any other part of the world.

The *aye-aye* is a nocturnal animal, that is to say, it sleeps all day, and comes out of its hiding-place at night in search of food. It is somewhat like a huge cat in appearance, and has large, full eyes and a soft, brown coat. Its ears also are large, and look like india-rubber ; whilst its tail is long and bushy. This latter it curls round itself like a muffler during the day as it lies asleep. It wakes up at dusk and becomes active. The *aye-aye's* "hands" are something like those of a monkey, only it has a very curious, long, thin middle finger, which it uses in scooping out its food (often small insects)



"HAND" OF AYE-AYE, SHOWING LONG, THIN FINGER.

from under the bark of trees. When eating, this finger is extended, as shown in the sketch, whilst the rest are drawn back. A friend of ours kept an *aye-aye* for a time in a cage in order to learn all he possibly could of its habits, and I have seen it eating a hard-boiled egg in a most amusing fashion, simply scooping out the meat with its long finger. The teeth of the *aye-aye* are very powerful ; it can dig out pieces from a flat deal board as with a gouge. This singular

animal is quite rare even in Madagascar, and the natives regard it with superstitious dread.

Frogs are found by hundreds, not only in the swampy land in parts of the forest, but also in the interior ; and sometimes when we have been resting for the night in some small Malagasy hut, the croaking of what seemed like thousands of frogs has almost made sleep impossible.



LEATHEN WOMAN.

Crocodiles abound in most of the large rivers, and the crossing of these used to be very dangerous. Bridges are now being built, and the danger removed. But people living near these rivers are quite afraid of fetching water in the evening for fear of being attacked by one of these creatures.

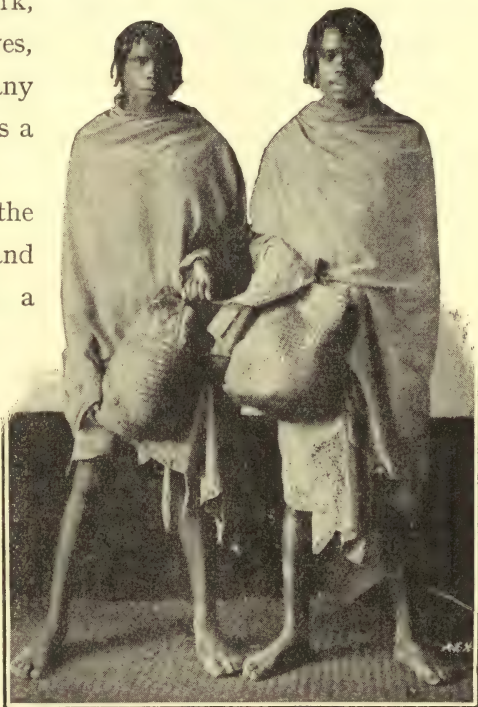
Collectors of butterflies would be extremely happy in our country, because we have many rare and beautiful specimens in all parts of the island ; one, called the andriandolo (queen of the butterflies) is most gorgeous, and I have heard of a sovereign being given for a single butterfly.

There are various kinds of birds in the forest, the most familiar being the falcon, buzzard, kestrel-hawk, heron, parrot, king-fisher, the Malagasy cuckoo and blackbird, the owl and night-jar, as well as rollers, bulbuls, couas, sunbirds and many other foreign species ; but

we miss exceedingly the sweet songs of our English birds. A gaily-dressed little bird called the "*jody*" (foo-dy) has bright, vermilion-coloured feathers, and flits about almost like a big butterfly; but it has no pleasant song with which to cheer us. Another bird called the "*tákatrá*," a kind of stork, is rather feared by the natives, and it is said by them that any one destroying its nest becomes a leper.

Having passed through the forest, we rise to higher land still. Many fine mountains, a few clothed with trees, but mostly bare and sometimes rugged, are seen in every direction, till we reach the central province, called *IMERINA*, which is one large plateau. Continuing our journey for thirty miles or so, we reach *Antananarivo*, which is built on a ridge over five hundred feet above the surrounding country. Of this remarkable city I hope to tell you more later on.

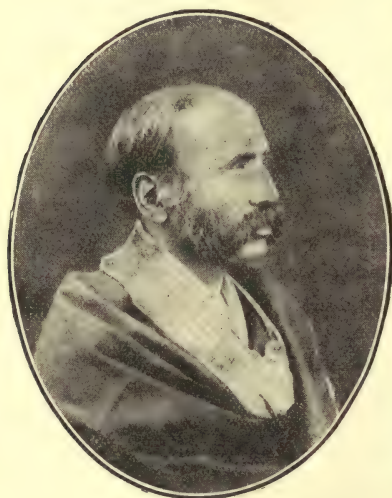
We must not forget that a number of our L.M.S. missionaries also work in the province of *Betsileo*, which is more than a hundred miles south of *Imerina*, the chief town being *Fianarantsoa*.



HEATHEN MEN (SIHANAKA TRIBE).

Interesting as the country of Madagascar may be, its inhabitants are far more so, and it is of the Malagasy and the work of the L.M.S. amongst them that I chiefly wish to write for you.

Many boys and girls seem to think that the Malagasy have a black skin and curly hair like the negroes. That is a mistake, for whilst a certain number answer to that description, the majority greatly resemble the people who live far away in the Malayan peninsula, and



A MALAGASY PRINCE.

are little like the black men of Africa who live so much nearer. The ordinary Malagasy is coffee-coloured or brown, his hair is black and generally straight, and he has bright, dark eyes, and beautiful teeth. As a race, these people are usually rather short; they have good, graceful figures, and even the women can walk from twenty to thirty miles a day for a number of days in succession, without being over-tired. They are intelligent, and, on the whole, easy to teach, partly, prob-

bably, because they are so eager to learn. Whilst the Malagasy are exceedingly quick to imitate, and have marvellous memories, they are not in the least original, hence they are much more dependent on their teachers and leaders than otherwise they would need to be.

There are numerous distinct tribes in Madagascar, and I am sorry to say that many of these still live in heathen darkness, thousands of Malagasy not having heard, even once, the name of Jesus.

Great is the difference in the *appearance* of those who have received the Gospel and those who have not. The tribe which is the most advanced is called the *Hova* (pronounce *Hoó-va*), a people found in the province of Imerina. The photo given on the opposite page is that of a well-educated native, a noble, and my readers will, I am sure, agree with me that he has a well-shaped head and an intelligent face.

But the poor Malagasy who has never been taught nor helped in any way by the missionary presents a very different figure. Some, perhaps, would never look so well as this nobleman; but it is really astonishing what a great change is made by a living knowledge of the love of Christ, not only in their characters, but even in their faces. I think this is the case all the world over, but perhaps in a heathen country it is more noticeable.



BABY'S CRADLE.

Malagasy live largely on boiled rice with a little cooked meat. They are also fond of fruit, many kinds of which grow abundantly in most parts of the country. As a rule boys and girls have only two meals a day, and some are so very poor they get but one, tasting meat with their rice perhaps once a week. The poorest people live oftener on the root of the manioc, from which in some countries tapioca is made.

Malagasy children wear very little clothing indeed, excepting in and near Antananarivo, Fianarantsoa and one or two other large towns. But all, both men, women and children, wear what is called a "*lamba*," a kind of shawl gracefully arranged to cover most of the body.

This "*lamba*" is baby's cradle very often during the day, and



TRANSPLANTING THE RICE.

the women will work in the rice fields, carry waterpots on their heads, or walk long distances with baby quietly sleeping on mother's back.

The houses of the Malagasy vary much. Some are made of bamboo or of the traveller's tree, or of wood. In the large towns they are now made of sun-dried brick plastered over with mud, and with tiled roofs. Only the rich have glass windows; in other cases a little

wooden shutter is opened during the day, letting in light and air at the same time. Most of the houses are quite small, consisting of one or two rooms as the case may be. The floors are usually of mud, covered over by mats made generally of coarse rushes. Chairs and tables are luxuries for the few.

Strange to say, many Malagasy think much more about the tomb



TOMB OF A NOBLE FAMILY.

in which they are to be buried than the house in which they live, and they will work hard and save ever so much money in order to prepare a large family tomb. Though all their lives they may have to wear cotton garments or something even cheaper, they like to think that when they die their bodies will be wrapped in silk ! Isn't that very strange ?

Here is the picture of a tomb belonging to a noble family. Do

you see the door at its entrance, and the little hut on the top ? Inside the tomb are rows of shelves on which the bodies are laid.

It used to be the custom to place rice and honey regularly in the hut in case the departed spirits needed refreshment ! And even now the relatives bury with their friends who die those things which pleased them most when they were still living. For instance, I knew a young man who died not long ago, and he had buried with him a watch which he had treasured very much and a small English picture which a friend of mine had given to him.

Hundreds of dollars ¹ used to be buried with those who were very rich, and not one silk lamba, but many were used ; so it really cost much to bury a Malagasy of high social position.

In Antananarivo we now have a museum, and in various rooms are shown the multitude of things formerly buried with the kings and queens of Madagascar. A separate room is set apart for each sovereign, and every room is quite full ! One king had buried with him, amongst other things, cups and saucers, a table, chairs, fine suits of clothing, silver ornaments, telescopes, and, what will amuse you very much to hear, I expect, a barrel-organ ! As the handle was turned, not only was strange music given forth, but four little figures attached to the organ began to dance.

Funerals in Madagascar are more expensive, comparatively speaking, than in England, and debts are often incurred which only many years can remove.

It is the custom to visit all friends who are bereaved and to offer, as a token of sympathy, a small piece of money, which goes towards defraying these heavy funeral expenses.

¹ A dollar is worth four shillings.

CHAPTER II

FROM PALANQUIN TO MOTOR-CAR

IT seems as if I hear some boys or girls saying to one another "Whatever is a palanquin? Of course everybody knows what a motor-car is!" Now in Madagascar we should hear just the reverse. It is true that some Malagasy have now seen motor-cars, but the



MRS. MILLEDGE IN HER PALANQUIN.

majority would simply say, "Whoever heard of a motor-car? What *can* it be? We all know what a palanquin is!"

Here is a picture of a lady riding in Malagasy style.

You will see that the palanquin is a simple kind of seat attached to two long poles. These poles are from nine to ten feet long, and about fifteen inches apart. Four natives carry the palanquin shoulder high, and this has been the chief means of travelling all over the country until quite recently. Now in many parts of Madagascar, we have good roads on which it is possible to journey by motor-car.

In this chapter I am going to tell you how my husband and I first travelled from Tamatave to Antananarivo fifteen years ago, and then how we came from the capital to the coast last year (1906). You will then see that even in this far-away country we have not been standing still, and you will understand better why this chapter is headed "From Palanquin to Motor-car."

The distance from Tamatave to the capital is about two hundred and forty miles, and you may be surprised to hear that it took us *nine days* to perform it. In England such a journey could be accomplished in five or six hours easily. That was not our only difficulty; but we were actually obliged to take with us everything we needed by the way, in the shape of bedding, food, etc. It was just like going for more than a week's picnic, and if we happened to forget anything, then we simply had to go without it for nine days. Food, little portable beds, bedding, kettle, saucepan, teapot, knives and forks, cups and saucers, and it seemed like a hundred and one things besides, had to be packed in large native baskets, and these, too, were carried by porters.

As the journey was long and difficult, we had eight bearers each,

four carrying at a time and changing with their companions every few minutes. This change was made whilst the men were trotting, or even running, along, but not once did they miss catching the pole and placing it on the shoulder.

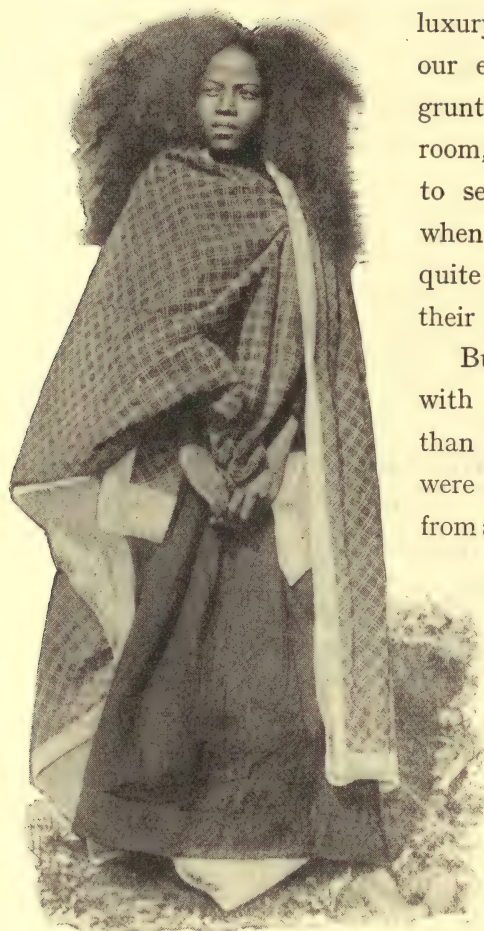
We were very excited on our first day's journey, and we wondered much what the little hut would be like in which we should take lodgings for the night. It was not so bad as we expected, but it turned out to be the best native accommodation we had on all that tedious journey. Perhaps that was just as well.



"GRAND HOTEL" FOR THE NIGHT.

Here is a picture showing our "Grand Hotel." You will notice our two palanquins reared up by the hut, and numerous little boxes and baskets containing the various things needed for the night. We had this little cabin all to ourselves; but on other occasions we found fowls, ducks, geese, etc., wishing to find a night's lodging also, and

not in the least pleased when we turned them out. Rats and mosquitoes were not so manageable, and these we had to put up with, much against our will.



WOMAN IN MOURNING.

I remember very well staying at a double-roomed house one night, and this might be considered a luxury ; but whilst we were getting our evening meal I heard such a grunting and snorting in the next room, that I quietly opened the door to see who were our neighbours, when I discovered a mother-pig and quite a family of tiny ones taking their supper, too.

But we had a far better night with pigs in the adjoining room, than on another occasion, when we were sleeping nearly two miles away from any village or house even. We

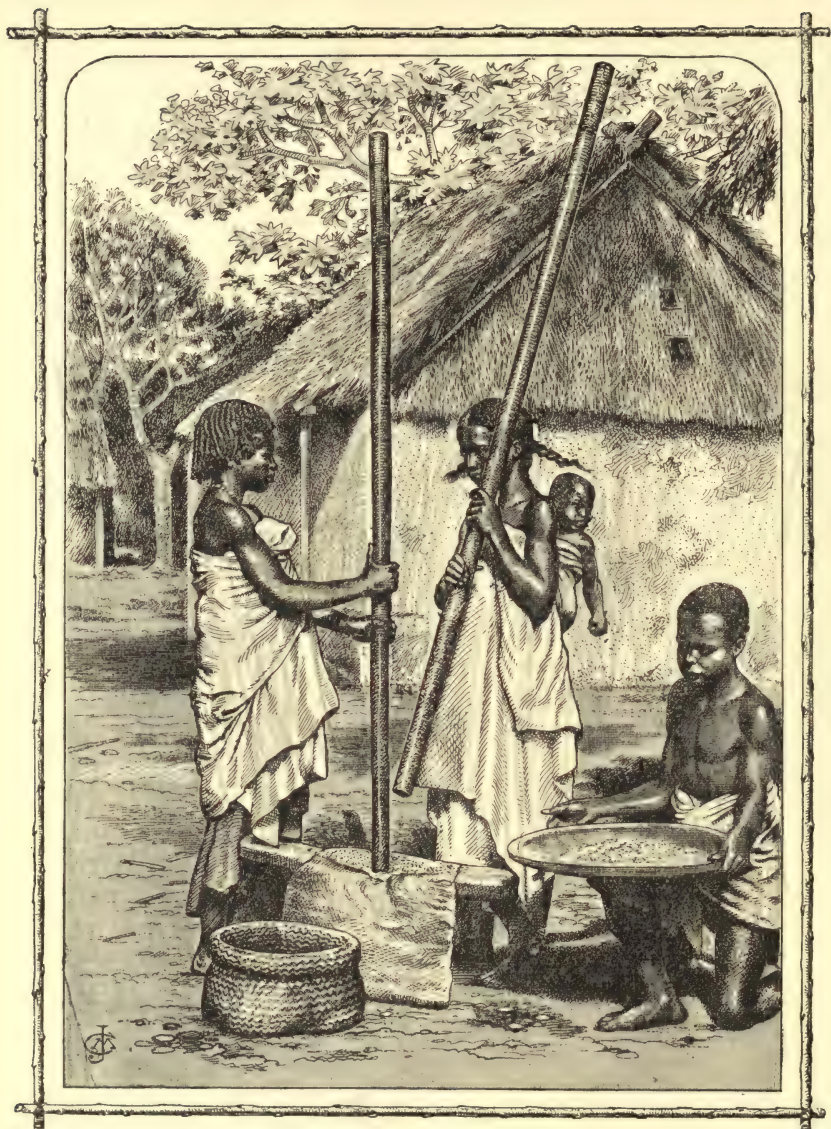
were a party of seven, one being a little baby-boy. Our "hotel" for the night consisted of three small wooden rooms : there were doors, it is true, but no locks. Just as we were going to sleep, we heard a band of people coming towards our lonely quarters,

some shouting loudly as if in anger. They banged at our doors, and told us that unless we turned out at once they would kill us. A drunken officer, sad to say, led this company of soldiers; being intoxicated, he never found out that our doors were without locks, but we were very uncomfortable, especially when,



MALAGASY OXEN, SHOWING HUMP ON THE BACK.

having been to the nearest village, the party again returned about one o'clock in the morning, evidently more furious than ever. We never made a sound, as time after time the officer declared he would shoot us; but we were just quietly asking Jesus to take care of us, and of course He did. Even pigs are less annoying than drunken men!



NATIVE WOMEN POUNDING RICE.

We shall, however, be more than eight or even nine days in getting to Antananarivo, unless we take the nearest way! I hardly like describing to you the village at which we stayed the second night—it was so perfectly horrible. Some one had died that day, and on that account all the inhabitants were having a feast! Unfortunately for us, we arrived early in the afternoon, and were unable to go further, as the next village was too far off to reach before night-fall. Two huge bullocks were killed almost before our eyes. Women, with their hair pulled out, to show they were in mourning, pounded rice for the evening's festivities in a large mortar which stood before the hut in which, I suppose, the dead man lay. Finding no suitable accommodation we gladly went to the little chapel, and tried to sleep there. But such shouting and yelling I never heard, and we found that the people were taking large quantities of rum, and so were getting more drunken as the night wore on. This was indeed a very heathen village, and our hearts were sad to see the people leading such degraded lives, though we were happy in knowing that we had come to Madagascar for the purpose of trying to uplift them.

The lovely scenery through which we passed from day to day was a great pleasure to us, and refreshed us after the weary nights. For three days we were travelling south nearly parallel with the sea, which we often heard roaring in the distance. On the fourth day we turned inland, and we had a little change, for instead of sitting in our palanquins, we seated ourselves in the bottom of a long native canoe, really the trunk of a thick tree, with all unnecessary wood scooped out from it. The men rowed us along with wooden things like huge spoons, and providing every one sat quite still, we felt fairly safe. Our pleasure was damped by heavy rain, which we had to ladle out

of the boat. The natives sang a weird sort of boat-song and kept cheerful.

Leaving the river, our porters again hoisted the palanquins, and we began a difficult ascent in the pouring rain. In some places the red, thick mud was so deep that the men sank nearly knee-deep, and we marvelled much at their courage, strength and good temper. That evening, a little extra money for buying their supper rejoiced all hearts.



NATIVE CANOES.

Next day we entered the forest. Instead of being, as we expected, a flat sort of plain covered with thousands of trees, we found it consisted of mountain after mountain covered with tall, tropical trees, rivers flowing through the intervening valleys. Lemurs, birds and butterflies, of which you have already heard, interested us exceedingly, and the lovely orchids gladdened our eyes. We forgot, for the time

being, all about the dirty huts, the rats, the mosquitoes, and everything else disagreeable, and gave ourselves up to the enjoyment of all that was beautiful around us. A day and a half were occupied in crossing through the forest. Further up country we sometimes got a



"A MOST RESPECTABLE BRIDGE."

slight shock when a river had to be crossed. We were told it simply swarmed with crocodiles, yet the only bridge across it was the rough trunk of an old tree ; and if one of the men had slipped, we might have become a dainty morsel for one of these hungry monsters. I

used to take a long breath as the men cautiously stepped on to the bridge, and that, if possible, had to last until we got across, because I was almost afraid of taking another deep breath for fear of that being enough to upset the balance of the men !

On the previous page is a picture of a most respectable bridge, which it was quite a pleasure to cross. You can judge a *very* little from this also of the beauties of the glorious forest.

On reaching the summit of one particular hill we were told to look behind and to say " Good-bye " to the sea, which in the distance looked like a bright streak of light. Then we heard a very sad story, which we knew to be perfectly true, because told by one of our own missionaries, the Rev. James Sibree, who was our good guide on this long journey. He told us that the name of the spot was called " The Weeping place of the Hovas." In the old days before the arrival of the missionary, many of the poor Malagasy were sold as slaves and sent away from their own country. Here they cried, and sobbed, and wailed, as they first caught sight of the much-dreaded sea which they were so soon to cross. Bound with chains, and then fastened together by cords into companies of from fifty to two hundred, these poor slaves were cruelly driven down to the coast like cattle. From 3,000 to 4,000 were sold every year.

The boys and girls who read this book will be proud to know that through the influence of the English government this terrible slave trade came to an end in 1820, though the rich people still continued to have slaves in their own island. That is one of the many blessings the English have brought to Madagascar.

Naturally we felt rather sad in saying " Good-bye " to the sea, because our own country seemed so far, far away but, on the other

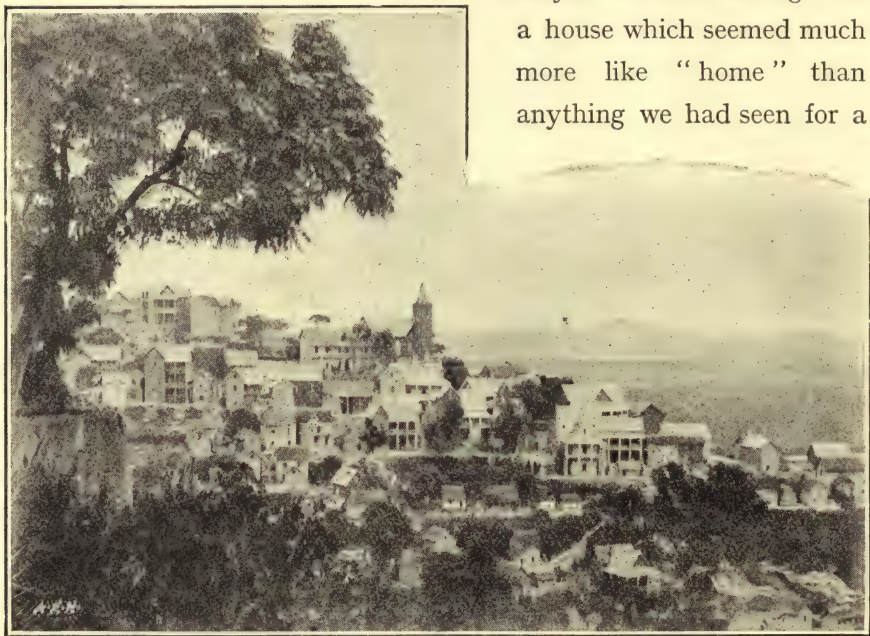


ANTANANARIVO.

hand, we rejoiced exceedingly in knowing that we had come to Madagascar to help to *free* the Malagasy from their old, heathen superstitions and from the *slavery of sin*.

After eight days of travelling, we found ourselves in the central province of Imerina, and less than forty miles from the capital. We

stayed for the last night in a house which seemed much more like "home" than anything we had seen for a



A BIT OF ANTANANARIVO.

long time. This house, or sanatorium, belongs to another English mission, and is where not only the owners (the Quaker missionaries) often come for change and rest, but the L.M.S. missionaries may come, too. Ankeramadinika is a charming spot, and after our experiences by the way, it was such a treat to sit on a proper chair

(though it was only a plain wooden one), and to have our meals nicely served at a respectable table.

Next morning we were up early, as usual, and off with the first glimmer of dawn. Imagine our excitement, if you can. After nearly eight weeks' travelling, we were at last to reach our new home, and to see Antananarivo, the city we had dreamt about, and thought about, and read about, many, many times. It was, indeed, a never-to-be-forgotten day, that 17th of August, 1892.

One sight saddened me much even on *that* happy day. I saw, for the first time in my life, a poor leper who was sitting by the roadside begging ; and I was told that there were hundreds of lepers in Madagascar, and alas ! that is still the case to-day.

Suddenly our men gave a great shout, and we wanted to shout, too, or to express our gladness and thankfulness in some other way, for there, built on a ridge rising up from the surrounding country, stood Antananarivo, perhaps twenty miles away. Had we been travelling by train in England we might have been at our destination in half an hour ; but, as it was, we had to sit patiently in our palanquins for five hours.

The capital looked very fine in the distance, and it seemed strange on reaching it to find that there were no roads, but only narrow, rough, uneven paths ; no carriages, cabs nor trams, and nothing a bit English-looking excepting the few homes of the missionaries. When by and by we found ourselves under the very hospitable roof of the Rev. R. and Mrs. Baron our happiness was far too great for any words to express it.

Less than a year ago we travelled from Antananarivo to London in exactly a month. Not only did we journey more quickly to the

coast, but instead of sailing all round by the South of Africa, and then past St. Helena and the Canary Islands, through the Bay of Biscay and the English Channel to London, we came north to Aden (which, as perhaps you know, is a British possession), then through the Red Sea and the Mediterranean to the south of France; after that we came through France to Paris and Calais, and soon reached London.

[I should like you to trace these routes on your map.]



NEW ROAD IN THE FOREST.

From Palanquin to Motor-car! Instead of being nine days in getting down to our ship, we were only three, and it seemed so wonderful that I must tell you a little about it.

We now have some excellent roads in Madagascar, and so we can travel in various ways, and not, as a few years ago, only in a palan-

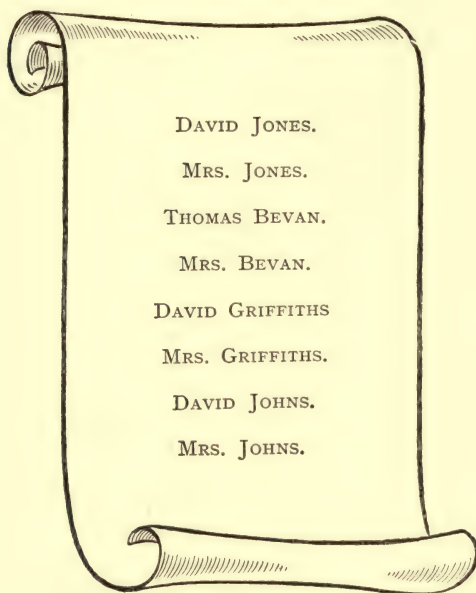
quin or on horseback. Instead of setting off at five o'clock in the morning, we mounted the motor-car at nine, and before evening found we had gone as far as we used to go in two days and a half. We were almost nervous when we went whizzing zigzag first down one steep hill and then down another, especially when on one side of the road lay a deep precipice eighty or a hundred feet deep. We are only used to "going" about four miles an hour in our country, so it really did seem strange to travel on a good road eighty miles in less than a day. Some of the travellers decided that the old-fashioned way was the nicer one, because when journeying slowly one can enjoy seeing the beautiful trees, the flowers, birds, etc., whereas in a motor-car one sees little but dust, and instead of inhaling the perfume of sweet-scented flowers by the roadside, one may be reminded of a lamp out of order! Anyhow, that is the suggestion sometimes given to those we may pass.

On the second day we actually saw a train, which is a very new thing indeed in our part of the world. I do not know whether or not it was afraid to go quickly in a new country, but anyhow it took us all day to accomplish about eighty miles—a journey managed in England in less than two hours! But we *could* enjoy the forest through which we were passing, and if the trees had not been so numerous, we should have had time to count them as we travelled lazily along. The rivers were lovely, and as we went over them by fine new bridges, we had no fear of crocodiles. Perhaps *they* are wondering what new animal the train is!

Instead of sleeping in a dirty little hut that night, we stayed at quite a good hotel, and it was most difficult to believe that we were still in dear old Madagascar.

The third day completed our list of wonders. The motor-car and train had taken the place of our palanquin for two days. Now a steamboat carried us most of the remaining way to Tamatave, and we saw no more of the old-fashioned, awkward canoes.

CHAPTER III
*EARLY MISSIONARIES AND THEIR WORK IN
MADAGASCAR*



IF I were a Welsh boy or a Welsh girl, I could not look at this Roll of Honour without feeling both proud and thankful. Brave Welsh missionaries, with wives equally courageous, were the first Protestant missionaries to go to Madagascar. It is now nearly ninety years since Mr. and Mrs. Bevan and Mr. and Mrs. Jones landed on

that far-away island; but their names are not forgotten there, and we want them to be remembered and honoured, not only in Wales, but also in England.

David Jones was the son of a deacon of the church at Neuaddlwyd; Thomas Bevan was born not far from the same place, and became a



DAVID JONES.

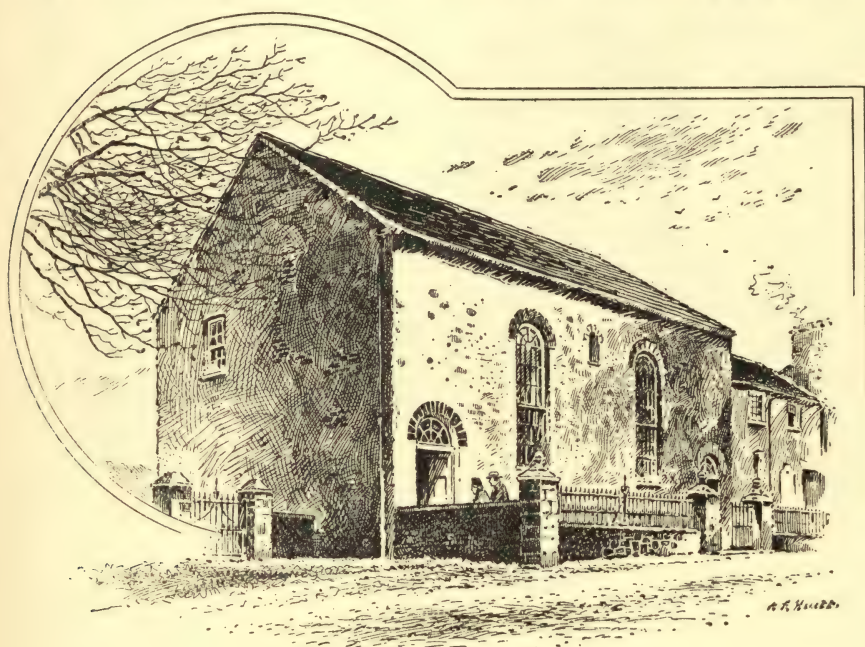
member of the Neuaddlwyd church when quite young. Strange to say, the future wives of David Jones and Thomas Bevan were also members of this church. Thus Cardiganshire has the honour of having sent out the first band of missionaries to Madagascar.

Later on both young men entered a preparatory school for preachers at Neuaddlwyd, conducted by the Rev. Dr. Phillips, whose memory is still treasured in Wales. He was

particularly interested in missions, and had read much about the poor Malagasy and their great need of missionaries. One night, it is said, the good doctor had a dream about Madagascar, which made him feel more sorrowful than ever for the natives. Next morning he told his students of his dream, and then asked, "Who will go out as a missionary to Madagascar?" David Jones had evidently been listening very eagerly and attentively, for instantly he cried out from the back of the class where he was sitting, "I will go." He was not

the only willing one, for Thomas Bevan almost as quickly made the same reply.

It was on August 20 and 21, 1817, that Thomas Bevan and David Jones were ordained to be missionaries. Though Neuaddlwyd was only a small village and the district round was not thickly populated,



CHURCH AT NEUADDLWYD.

it is said that 5,000 people were present. It must have been inspiring to have such a fine "send off." There was no building large enough to hold so many people ; the services were therefore held in the open air.

Travelling to Madagascar ninety years ago was a very different thing from what it is to-day. The voyage taken by these young mis-

sionaries was exceedingly slow and trying. Hearing very bad accounts of the climate of the "Great African Island," it was decided that the wives and two children should remain for a time at Mauritius, which, as you may know, is a small island belonging to the English, and about five hundred miles to the east of Madagascar itself.

On *August 18, 1818*, Thomas Bevan and David Jones landed at Tamatave. That is a red-letter day in the history of missions in Madagascar, and not a difficult one to remember.



THE NEUADDLWYD SEMINARY.

As King Radama I was not very friendly with the English Government at that moment, it was thought better for the missionaries to remain at Tamatave. They were kindly received by some of the chiefs living near, and finding it fairly easy to gather the Malagasy children around them to learn, Mr. Bevan and Mr. Jones were quite encouraged. After six weeks they returned to Mauritius for their wives and children. Very shortly afterwards Mr. Jones came back

to Tamatave, bringing with him Mrs. Jones and their little child. How delighted the Malagasy boys and girls would be to see a white baby! Sad to say, both baby and mother soon died; they happened to have come to the island at the most unhealthy time of the year. You will thus see that it was a brave Welsh lady who was the first missionary to lay down her life for Madagascar.

A few months later, when Mr. and Mrs. Bevan arrived with their baby, they were quite sad in finding Mr. Jones all alone, and so very ill that they feared he, too, would soon die. Almost before Mr. Jones had time to be glad because of the arrival of his friends, new troubles



KING RADAMA I.

commenced. The baby of Mr. and Mrs. Bevan died, a week later Mr. Bevan passed away, and in three or four days after that Mrs. Bevan joined her husband and baby in heaven. Thus in ten days father, mother, baby, all gone, and poor Mr. Jones, extremely ill and weak, left alone again. Was it not a dark beginning of mission work in Madagascar? Yet since that day many, both natives and mis-

sionaries, have gladly given their lives for this country, and we are eager to-day that *many others* should be willing to work for the Malagasy, and, if need be, to die for them, too. Especially do we look to Welsh boys and girls, when they are grown up, to fill up the ranks.

How many in the place of David Jones would have given in and returned to the far-away home in Wales? David Jones had not only a noble Welsh heart, but he had what is better still, a true *missionary* spirit; and, though treated unkindly by the traders of Tamatave, and often very ill, he began work again in a short time. After some months he went back to Mauritius in order, if possible, to get stronger, for he was constantly suffering from the terrible Malagasy fever.

At last Mr. Jones felt it was time to go to the capital, Antananarivo. He knew that was in every way a better centre for teaching and preaching. Owing largely to the influence of the Governor of Mauritius, who was interested in missions, Mr. Jones was kindly received by King Radama I on his arrival at Antananarivo.

In rather more than two months' time Mr. Jones opened the first little school in the capital. He began with three pupils, one of whom was the son of the king. The three soon became scores, and the scores hundreds, and now to-day in Madagascar the L.M.S. has hundreds of schools and thousands of pupils. Mr. Jones required a new school-room, as the little house in which he taught became too small. The king himself laid the foundation stone, and in the presence of the assembled people spoke most kindly of the missionary.

A year after the arrival of Mr. Jones in Antananarivo he had been made very happy by the coming of Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths. Once more he was able to hear some one speak his own language, for Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths were both Welsh. How delighted and cheered Mr.

Jones must have been in seeing friends from his own native land. Mr. Griffiths had also studied for a time under Dr. Phillips at Neuaddlwyd, and we can easily imagine how the two missionaries would enjoy talking together of their old teacher, their country, and the dear old home. This Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths were the father and mother of our good Dr. Griffith John's first wife, who was born in Madagascar, and so China and Madagascar were afterwards linked together, as they have often been since. Mrs. Griffiths had the privilege and the honour of being the first missionary's wife to enter the capital, and there to work for the native women.

I told you that Mr. Jones had quite a good-sized school ; but fancy, if you can, *a school without any books !* The Malagasy actually had no alphabet, and so nobody knew how to read or write. There was no printing, and there was not a single book in the Malagasy language. It must have been a very funny school—probably no slates, no books, no pictures ! And the teacher himself only knew a little of the language of his pupils, and of course nobody knew much English or Welsh ! I think Mr. Jones must have been very clever indeed to manage a school under such conditions.

The king himself was learning English, but he found it a strange language, and he thought for one thing that there were too many letters. He could not see why "*kat*" was not as good as "*cat*," and "*kame*" as easy as "*came*." And so when the missionaries talked to him about having a Malagasy alphabet, Radama said he was quite willing, only it must not be stupid like the English language, in having more letters than were needed. As a consequence, we only have twenty-one letters in Malagasy, instead of twenty-six as in English, and it really is much easier. For example, we are not troubled

with a letter "c," but "k" does duty for "c" as well as for itself.

You know how in English the letter "a" is sometimes pronounced one way, and sometimes another and *another*; as, for instance, "a" in "table" is not like "a" in "fat" or in "fall." The king did not like that, and he ordered that in the Malagasy alphabet one letter must stand for one sound, and only one. I think he was a very wise king, and I am sure English boys and girls must wish that we had had one like him long ago, then we should not be bothered with our spelling as we sometimes are. Look at the word "enough!" If only we might write "enuf" how much simpler it would be. Why would not "kof" do instead of "cough?"

Malagasy dictation is certainly easier than English or Welsh, just because King Radama and the early missionaries arranged the alphabet so sensibly. It took them nearly two years, but when it was done it was finished so satisfactorily that it has lasted ever since, and I never heard of any one complaining about it and wishing there were more letters or more sounds.

Mr. Jones and good Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths surely found Malagasy quite easy after the Welsh language, and no wonder they got on so quickly.

It is something for Welsh boys and girls to be proud of when they remember that the language of the Hova was first put into writing by two Welshmen.

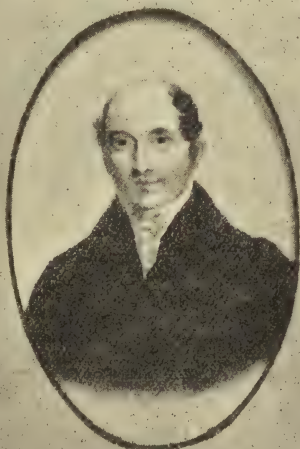
Whilst some of the children were being taught in school, other missionaries were not only teaching the men and the women to read and write, but they were also teaching carpentry, tanning, blacksmith's work, weaving and printing. The missionaries' wives taught



JONES



GRIFFITHS



JOHNS



FREEMAN

THE FATHERS AND FOUNDERS OF THE MADAGASCAR MISSION

needlework to the women, and so life was made more useful and far more interesting.

Some of the missionaries were also very busy putting the New Testament into the Malagasy language. This took much time, and needed great patience. Many copies were then printed, and the people read them with real joy. Later on the whole Bible was translated and printed into this language.

Those were busy days for these early missionaries, but they must have been very happy ones, because they were so fully spent in helping others and in doing good.

Eight years after the arrival of Mr. Jones in Antananarivo, King Radama I died. The missionaries were exceedingly sorry. They had often wished the king might become a true Christian. Radama had been very kind to the missionaries, and had encouraged them in their work ; his reign had much benefited his people, but he had not been willing to serve the Saviour of Whom the missionary daily taught.

CHAPTER IV

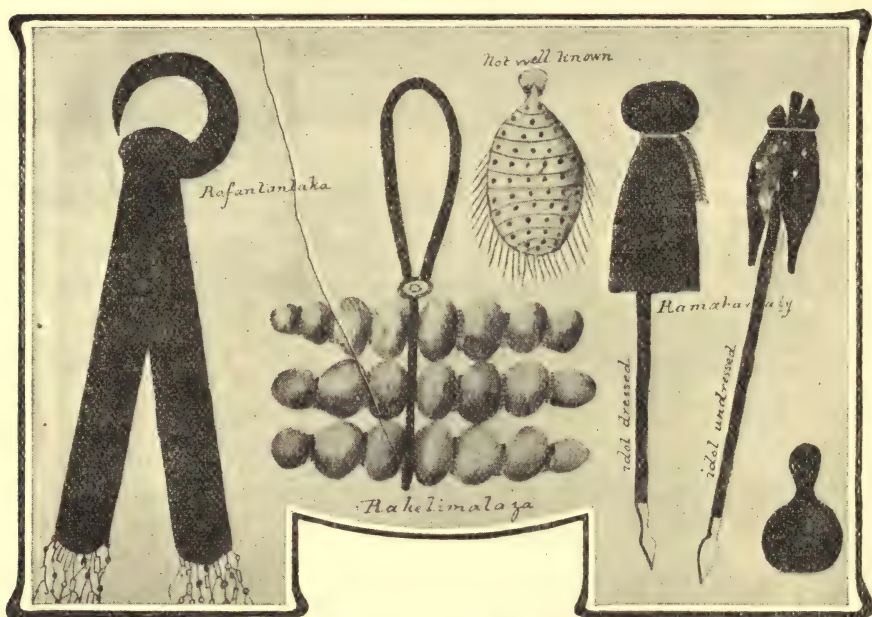
A CRUEL QUEEN—MALAGASY MARTYRS

ONE of the most cruel women who ever lived was Queen Ranavalona I of Madagascar. She came to the throne after her husband, Radama I, though he had arranged it differently, and did not wish her to be queen. Ranavalona worshipped the idols, and hated all those who did otherwise. Not only did most of the Malagasy believe in idols and charms, but they also worshipped the spirits of the dead kings and queens of their country, so Ranavalona was quite alarmed at the increase in the number of the Christians, because she feared that the power of the sovereign would grow less and less. She therefore did all she possibly could to stamp out Christianity, and her reign was one of the greatest cruelty.

At her coronation thousands of people were present. Taking into her hands two of the idols, she spoke thus : " I have received you from my ancestors ; I put my trust in you ; therefore support me." That was a very sad event for the Malagasy Christians as well as for the missionaries. They knew no good could come to the country if the sovereign trusted in idols.

The Christians continued to make progress, and at last some of them wished to be baptized in order that they might definitely show that they were determined to be true followers of Jesus Christ.

The queen in her palace grew more and more angry ; and one day she sent word to the missionaries, that as far as they themselves were concerned they might be Christians if they liked, but that in future she would not allow her people to be taught the " new religion." The missionaries were very sorrowful indeed, especially as they saw that



THE IDOLS OF QUEEN RANAVALONA I.

troublesome times were in store for the native Christians. They wondered, too, how the Malagasy would bear the trial, for, you see, they had not been learning long about Jesus and His love for them.

Later on the people were called together to hear the proclamation of Queen Ranavalona. Many, many thousands were present, and the queen told them that in future no one might be a Christian. Any

one continuing after that date to pray or to worship the God of the white man might be put to death for so doing.

Imagine what a very dark day that was for Madagascar ! Perhaps you think that the Christians at once destroyed their Testaments, gave up meeting together for prayer, and carried out the word of the queen. A few weak ones, perhaps, did, but the majority had learned to love and honour the King of Kings and to serve the Lord Jesus with all their heart. They could not dishonour their Saviour, and therefore they could not obey the words of Ranavalona and give up "the praying," even though the queen commanded it.

The missionaries soon saw that it would be much easier for the Christians if they went away, and so with heavy hearts they made preparations for leaving Antananarivo. And yet it was just the time when they longed to be with their people, that they might help and comfort them. The Christians were extremely sad, because they loved and trusted the missionaries, and regarded them as their best of earthly friends.

Two of the missionaries were allowed to stay behind for a short time, though they were badly treated in many ways.

The two devoted missionaries were very busy indeed translating not only the unfinished part of the Bible, but also the *Pilgrim's Progress*. After a time they had no further excuse for remaining, and so they, too, set off for the coast.

And now the Malagasy Christians were left without a single missionary to encourage them ; but God was with them, and though many had to suffer, He knew that that was best not only for them individually, but for the Malagasy Church as a whole.

The Christians were no longer able to worship in their little chapels,

but they met in private. Sometimes a few prayed together in the house of a friend ; at other times a number agreed to meet in a certain cave miles away from Antananarivo, and there hold a little service. Others went away to the forest or wandered about the deserts, where sometimes they were in hiding for weeks, often suffering for want of food, and not unfrequently dying for lack of it. Occasionally they worshipped on the top of a mountain or very high hill, in order that



"OCCASIONALLY THEY WORSHIPPED ON THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN."

if the soldiers were pursuing they could easily be seen and the Christians could make their escape.

The clouds were gathering thickly ; many were made slaves, and at last some of the more noted followers of Jesus Christ were put in prison, bound in heavy chains. Even this did not satisfy the hard-hearted Kanavalona, and she ordered that Rasalama, a brave Malagasy woman, should be put to death unless she would promise to give

up her Christianity. That was a terrible test. I wonder how many Welsh or English young women would have been as faithful and courageous as Rasalama? How many would have felt they might be *secret* Christians, and so save their lives? Rasalama was not made of such poor stuff; she felt she must be true to Jesus at any cost, even to the giving up of her life.

For a short time she was cruelly tortured by being placed in irons. These were so arranged as to draw her body together as if about to be placed in a small case, and the pain was agonizing. Next day the irons were removed, and Rasalama was led to the spot where she was to be executed. She said how happy she was; that God had taken



SLAVES IN CHAINS.

all fear away from her; and as she walked on her way to Ambôhipôtsy (the southern suburb of Antananarivo) she sweetly sang some hymns. She passed the little church where she had been taught of the Saviour's love, and where also she had been baptized. By and by she reached

the place where her life was to be taken. Calmly she knelt down and committed her spirit to God. In that attitude she was speared to death. Those looking on were quite astonished, and even the executioner said: "There is some charm in the religion of the white people which takes away the fear of death." One faithful friend, who witnessed her calm and peaceful death, when he returned, exclaimed, "If I might die so tranquil and happy a death, I, too, would willingly die for the Saviour."

It was on August 14, 1837, that the brave, true-spirited Rasalama suffered as a martyr for Christ's sake. And so a Malagasy *woman* proved to the Christian world that her people were worth helping, worth teaching; nay, worth far more than that! Twenty years had not yet passed since Wales had sent out her first missionaries to Madagascar, and as we think of it in these days, our hearts rejoice as we see the way in which God enabled those early missionaries and their pupils to witness so faithfully for Him.

Terrible as was the death of Rasalama, it was most triumphant. Dogs devoured her poor body, but the angels joyfully bore her glorified spirit to Heaven.

The persecution by Queen Ranavalona lasted for twenty-five years, and during that time others were speared to death like Rasalama, and on the same spot.

But this was not the only form of death suffered by the Malagasy martyrs. Another method was by what we call the "*tangèna*." The *tangèna* is a tree which grows in the forest of Madagascar. It bears a nut which is poisonous. This nut was scraped into banana juice and given to those who were said to have broken the law, which included the Christians. Many of the judges were dishonest men, and often

if the friends of the one who was to take the *tangèna* paid a large sum of money, the amount of poison given was made very small, and then as a rule it took little effect ; anyhow, it did not kill the accused, and he was said to be "not guilty." It is said that thousands died from the "*tangèna*" during the reign of Queen Ranavalona I.

Not far from the palace was a precipice, 150 feet deep, with huge pieces of rock at the foot of it. This was the sacred scene of the death of other martyrs. On one day alone Ranavalona ordered fifteen Christians to be put to death at this place, which is called Am-pà-mà-rì-nà-nà, and also the "Rock of Hurling." They were carried through some



"THE ROCK OF HURLING."
(From a Native Sketch.)

of the streets of Antananarivo tied to poles. Afterwards on reaching the "Rock of Hurling" they were wrapped in mats, carried to the edge of the precipice and rolled over. One, a young girl, was

spared by the queen's orders because she was a favourite ; but even *she* begged to be allowed to suffer with her companions.

A more horrible death awaited four others who were put to death on the same day. They were nobles ; three being men, one a woman. It was illegal to spill the blood of any of the nobility ; these martyrs were therefore burnt alive in another part of the city called Fà-rà-vò-hì-trà. Like the heroic Rasalama, they sang a hymn as they were carried to the place where they were to suffer. The hymn they sang began with these words, only they were in the Malagasy language :—

Going home are we to God.

The last verse, which was most suitable for the occasion, was :—

When we shall die
And depart from this earth,
Then increase our joy ;
Take us to Heaven,
Then rejoice
Shall we for evermore.

Reaching the spot, each of the four was tied to a post erected there. And then it seemed as if God wished to give them new hope and courage, for a beautiful rainbow appeared in the sky, with three lovely arches, and the end of one seemed to rest on the stakes to which the martyrs were fastened. The rain poured in torrents, and the multitudes of people present were so frightened that many of them ran away. By and by the pile of wood was made to burn, and then what do you think ? As the flames rose up and the wood crackled, instead of the lookers-on hearing cries of pain and agony they heard sweet songs of

praise. The martyrs were singing ! Sometimes they prayed, and in praying they imitated their Master when He was dying on the Cross, for they, too, were heard to say, "*O Lord, receive our spirits ; for Thy love has caused this to come to us ; and lay not this sin to their charge.*" A native who was present on this occasion wrote : " Thus they prayed as long as they had any life ; then they died, but softly, gently. Indeed, gentle was the going forth of their life, and astonished were all the people around that beheld the burning of them there."

That happened on MARCH 28, 1849, a day never to be forgotten in Madagascar. During that same year it is said that about 2,000 suffered in various ways, simply for being Christians.

The wicked queen thought to get rid of all the Christians by her cruel treatment of them, but instead of becoming fewer and fewer, they grew more and more numerous. The heathen people saw that the God of the Christians could do for His followers what their poor idols could not do for them. They discovered that the Christians were happy, that they had a joy of which those who worshipped idols knew nothing, that they possessed the spirit of forgiveness, that the fear of death was taken from them, and many longed to know more of this new religion and to become Christians, too, even though they might have to die for it. That shows so well that if only we are true followers of the Lord Jesus we can easily influence others to become the same ; and if we are not thus helping, there is something quite wrong with us.

Eight years after the burning of the martyrs the people were again ordered to meet together to hear the words of the queen. Ranavalona seemed more enraged than ever, and declared that she would never

rest until she had cleared her country of every Christian. A few days after this big meeting, twenty-one Christians were stoned and then beheaded ; many were thrown over the " Rock of Hurling," and it was believed that more Christians suffered at this time than at any other.

The great strength and comfort of the believers during these weary years was the Bible. Some possessed a gospel, others only a few pages. These were hidden amongst their garments, and sometimes the Bibles were buried for safety. Several of these Bibles were, years after, brought to England.

During the days of persecution the Malagasy Christians increased more than fourfold, thus proving that sometimes the dark days are the best for the Church of Christ. It is often then that God seems nearer, faith increases, and love becomes truer.

Boys and girls have now and again to bear hard things ; but you know the tree that can bear the strongest storms sends its roots down deepest. Remember the Malagasy in their " dark days," and try to be as brave as many of them were.

Queen Ranavalona I at last died, and everybody seems to have been glad. Even the heathen rejoiced, and the Christians hoped that brighter times were in store for them.

CHAPTER V

A MALAGASY HEROINE

IN fancy I hear some boy or girl saying : “ Is it a true story you are going to tell us, or just a made-up one ? ” As true stories are always worth most, I am glad to tell you that mine is not a “ make-up,” but perfectly true.

The name of my heroine was Ra-fa-ra-va-vy, and she lived in the days of the cruel Ranavalona. She was a lady of noble family, her husband was a colonel in the Malagasy army, and they loved one another very much. Rafaravavy and her people were worshippers of



(FACSIMILE OF HANDWRITING.)

the idols when my story commences, and they were very true and loyal to their gods.

On one occasion Rafaravavy suggested to her husband that they should buy a new idol, larger and better than those they possessed ; so they went to the idol-maker, and asked him to make one of the best he possibly could. A piece of wood was chosen, and the task was commenced. Rafaravavy seems to have been in a hurry to get

her new god. She and her husband sat in the house of the idol-maker throughout the day and talked to him of what they thought would be quite a treasure for them. As one part was carved and then another, pieces of wood were scattered about the little room, and now and again the idol-maker paused in his work, gathered the fragments of wood together, and placed them on the fire. By and by the god was completed, and Rafaravavy returned home with her husband well pleased and satisfied.

Some time after the above incident Rafaravavy was visiting friends who were Christians. These friends were reading together from the 44th chapter of Isaiah, and this is part of what they read :—

“ *Mamboly ny hazo orno izy, ka ampanirin' ny ranonorana izany ;*

“ *Ary dia anaovan' ny olona kitay izany ka analany hamindroany ; eny, hampirehetiny izany mba hanendasany mofo ; anaovany andriamanitra izany, ka dia ivavahany ; eny, anaovany sarinjavatra voasokitra koa izany, ka dia ianakohofany, etc.*

In English this reads —

“ He planteth a fir tree, and the rain doth nourish it.

“ Then shall it be for a man to burn ; and he taketh thereof and warmeth himself ; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread ; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it ; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto,” etc.

Rafaravavy was very thoughtful, and when she reached home she told her husband what the Christians had been reading, and how it represented just what they had seen at the house of the idol-maker—a piece of wood, part of which was used for burning on the fire, and the rest made into an idol ! And then Rafaravavy saw how foolish was their worship of these pieces of carved wood, and before long she

became a true Christian. Later on she became one of the chief leaders of the faithful band of disciples of Jesus Christ then found in Antananarivo. In fact, she was most truly one of the heroines of those days !

Queen Ranavalona had not yet ordered the closing of the little chapels, so one of the first things Rafaravavy did after becoming a Christian was to buy one of the largest houses in the capital, and make it into a place of worship.

But the dark days were near when the queen declared that all should die who prayed to the God of the white man. Notwithstanding this, Rafaravavy and a few friends often privately met together at her own house to read the Bible and to pray.

In those days, and for long after, the Malagasy kept slaves. Some of these, however, were treated very kindly indeed, and I am quite sure Rafaravavy was good to hers, as you will see from the following story.

Probably hoping to receive money or some other present, three of Rafaravavy's slaves went to the judges and informed them that she and her friends were still reading God's Word and praying together. A Christian who overheard this quickly hastened to tell Rafaravavy, in order that she might escape to some place of safety if possible. Her father, being told of the conduct of the slaves, was very angry, and ordered them to be put in chains. Rafaravavy was extremely grieved, and she asked that the irons might be removed. She sent for her accusers, forgave them, and lovingly talked to them of Jesus, thinking far more about the salvation of these slaves, who had been so unkind to her, than of her own life. Ultimately two of the three became Christians, and one died for Christ's sake. No doubt the gentle, forgiving spirit of Rafaravavy had led these slaves

to think of the marvellous love of the Saviour Whom their mistress served so faithfully, and His love turned one tale-bearer into a saint and another into a martyr !

Before hurrying away to save her life, Rafaravavy had first hidden her Bible and other books.

Some little time afterwards, hearing that Mr. and Mrs. Johns were leaving the capital, Rafaravavy secretly went to say " Good-bye " to them about three o'clock on the morning of their departure. Very touching was the farewell which took place between the missionary's wife and her friend. They never expected to meet again on earth, and though it seemed most probable that our heroine must suffer death for her faith, she was calm and composed.

The same day, however, the queen sent a message to Rafaravavy, saying she intended forgiving her because of the good service done by her father to the country—but only, of course, on condition that Rafaravavy gave up her new religion. Should she continue " the praying," then she must pay for it with her life.

But our heroine went quietly on as before. She could not be untrue ; she would rather die than give up serving Jesus.

Suddenly one day soldiers came to her house. Some seized her possessions, and others said they had orders to take her, too. The road chosen was the one leading to the place where the criminals were executed, and naturally Rafaravavy thought her life was about to be taken. Passing quite near to a Christian whom she knew, she asked him to accompany her, that should she have grace given her to die triumphantly, he might tell their companions and so strengthen their faith. I dare say Rafaravavy also felt it would help her to have a fellow Christian near to pray for her. But, quite unexpectedly, the

soldiers turned into a house, and there this noble gentlewoman was put in heavy, cruel fetters. As these were being riveted on to the body, one of the men suggested that they should not be made too firm, for they would only be the more difficult to remove on the following morning, when Rafaravavy would be put to death.

During that night a strange thing happened. Some houses got on fire, and as they were built close together and of wood, with thatched roofs, the fire quickly spread, and soon many houses were burnt to the ground. There was a great commotion in Antananarivo. The people were terrified and thought the gods were angry with the queen because of her conduct to Rafaravavy, and for days the latter was left unmolested, wondering however, from day to day, as she lay there in her chains, what would happen to her.

Again a message came from Ranavalona, saying that could it be proved that Rafaravavy had been holding private meetings for the Christians, then she must be sold in the market as a slave. This, of course, was considered a terrible disgrace, and especially for one of noble birth. Meanwhile, you must picture our heroine in chains. The fetters were so heavy and cruel that they were called by a name which means "to make to cry." But all cheerfully borne in the lonely prison for Christ's sake.

It was not very long before the Queen's threat was carried out, and Rafaravavy was publicly sold as a slave; but happily she got a kind master. Besides having a certain amount of freedom, she was often able to see her husband, and this was a true joy for her.

The fact that Rafaravavy was still a sincere Christian could not be disguised. Some of the other Christians were being put to death,

so after consulting with some of her friends, our heroine, with several others who were also "marked characters," made their escape.

On that very night a warrant for her death had been prepared, and next morning the soldiers came to the house, only to discover that she was not there.

When the queen heard this she was extremely angry, and soldiers were sent in every direction to search for the missing ones, and especi-



MALAGASY VILLAGE.

ally for Rafaravavy. Great excitement prevailed in the capital. Kind friends followed the fugitives, urging upon them to be very careful. Those who sheltered the Christians ran great risk, and were in peril of their lives. We see from this how loyal the Christians were to one another.

Rafaravavy and her companions had many narrow escapes, and their deliverances were indeed wonderful.

For a time they hid with friends at night, and early in the morn-

ing, before any of the villagers were about, they left the house and concealed themselves amongst the mountains near.

On one occasion Rafaravavy returned to the village rather earlier than usual. She was detected, and immediately the authorities were made acquainted with the fact. Soldiers were sent to the village to look for her. As two were seen approaching the house, Rafaravavy took refuge behind a mat. She could hear the conversation with the owner of the house, and was almost afraid to breathe for fear of being discovered. By and by her friend left the house, and the soldiers, thinking he was looking for her, followed. She watched them most eagerly as well as she could, and just at the right moment made her escape.

It was evident that our heroine and her friends could no longer hide in this village, and so they wandered about from place to place. Very often they were drenched by the falling rain, and perhaps, as you know, when it rains in Madagascar it falls far, far more heavily than it ever does in England or Wales. With clothes soaked through to the skin they had to ramble about, hungry and shivering, and with the constant knowledge that soldiers were looking for them, ready to take them to the cruel queen. Frequently they actually found that their pursuers had been to a village before them, and had given orders that if a strange woman were seen about she was to be kept a prisoner ; at times they even saw the soldiers, and had to escape as well as they could. Sometimes they hid in the bush, and once Rafaravavy slipped into a bog, and would have been absolutely swallowed up and her life lost, had not some one quickly pulled her out.

One night she came to a village where lived a friend. Rafaravavy received a hearty, loving welcome, but was told that the soldiers were

at that very moment in the village itself, and she must be hidden as hastily as possible. Near the house was a pit ; the friend helped Rafaravavy into it, and then, to make her the more safe from discovery, placed a bunch of thorns at its mouth. There our heroine remained until the soldiers left.



RIVER SCENE.

There were times when the little band of Christians took a night's shelter behind the huge pieces of rock or boulders by the side of a river. It was intensely dreary, and the nights were cold ; often they were faint and fatigued, but their courage never failed.

Being constantly obliged to travel by night, they met sometimes

with robbers and brigands ; and one night they had actually taken shelter in a cave used by the brigands themselves.

Several nights were weirdly spent lying amongst the tall grass on some old tomb.

And so for three months or more, Rafaravavy and her friends managed to outdo the vigilant efforts of the soldiers, and Queen Ranavalona sat in her palace more and more annoyed as the days wore on.

Good news one day reached Rafaravavy. She heard that Mr. Johns, the missionary, was at Tamatave, and she knew he was there in case he could render any assistance to the persecuted Christians. Travelling stealthily to the capital, she managed to send off a letter to Mr. Johns by two trustworthy men, in which she asked whether he could possibly arrange for herself and a few friends to leave the country. A Malagasy official helped Mr. Johns in all his plans, and after some weeks a reply came, asking Rafaravavy and the others to come at once.

Six friends, with two Christians as servants, decided to take this most dangerous journey together. For four days and nights they never entered a house, but slept out in the open, and during the last three days they did not even taste food. Sometimes they met with those who recognized them, and they knew that if only the soldiers were informed in time to overtake them, it would mean certain death.

Their journey through the forest was slow and tedious, and as they travelled along the winding, narrow paths, they never knew whom they might suddenly come across, neither could they see if they were being pursued.

But the longest journey comes to an end, and at last the little company neared Tamatave. The servants were sent on with a letter

to the kind friend who had been eagerly waiting and watching for their arrival.

It was arranged for a canoe to fetch the party from a certain place after dark. Even then they had a narrow escape, and almost got into the wrong canoe!

Eventually they came in safety to the house of their friend, and great was the rejoicing. How refreshing was that evening meal after three days without food! Together they read God's Word, and praise and prayer ascended to Heaven from that humble Malagasy house near the sea.

Mr. Johns had planned that when the next ship came to Tamatave, en route for Mauritius, the six Malagasy must sail by it. After a few days the boat arrived. Rafaravavy and her one female friend (the other four were men) were ordered to cut their hair short, and when it became dark all were to follow their guide through the jungle to the seashore. Here each received a suit of sailor's clothes, which they quickly donned. Now was the critical moment; one wrong movement and all would be spoiled. These six, strange, sailor-looking boys had to be got on board. As they neared the quay an official stood there. How were they to pass without being suspected? How their hearts must have palpitated! Would this officer ask their names, and would they yet be discovered and sent back in chains to Antananarivo and to execution? A friend, seeing the situation, quietly stepped forward and engaged the officer in conversation, and all unnoticed they passed by, and on to the good ship, where the captain gave them a hearty welcome.

Safe on deck the little group asked permission to offer a song of praise to their Deliverer, which request being granted, they imme-

diately sang one of their sweet Malagasy hymns, and then with bowed heads thanked God for thus bringing them to a "haven of rest." The captain and those on board gathered round, and greatly were they touched as they looked at Rafaravavy and her friends, remembering that they were leaving their native land rather than deny their Lord and Master.

After some months of travelling England was reached, and our heroine and her companions were most warmly welcomed by the Directors of the London Missionary Society. Rafaravavy was known as "Mary," and she lived with her dear friend Mrs. Johns, the wife of the missionary. Little did they dream when they said "Good-bye" on that early morning in Antananarivo that when next they met it would be in England. All who saw "Mary" were charmed by her gentle, loving manner and her noble bearing.

Meetings were held in Exeter Hall, London, and in other places, and you may well imagine how glad the boys and girls were to see those brave Malagasy Christians, and to hear the story which I have just told to you.

Later on Mrs. Johns and "Mary" went back to Mauritius, where many of the persecuted Christians waited until the "dark days" were over in Madagascar. Here in Mauritius "Mary" died in 1848 or 1849.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOOD QUEEN RANAVALONA II

THE cruel Queen Ranavalona I was succeeded by her son, Radama II. Two years afterwards he was strangled to death, and his wife, Rasoherina, became queen. She only reigned five years, when her younger cousin, the good Queen Ranavalona, came to the throne.

Though King Radama never became a Christian, and Queen Rasoherina was a firm believer in the idols, yet they were both kind to the Christians; and once more the missionaries were allowed to work in the island.

It is pleasant to remember that when a treaty was being made with England, our own beloved Queen Victoria sent a special message to Queen Rasoherina, asking her not to allow the Malagasy Christians to be persecuted. Rasoherina kept her promise, and for this we respect her memory. No wonder many of the Malagasy loved our noble Queen Victoria, and they often prayed for her in their churches, as they did for their own sovereign.

Ranavalona II was almost as different from Ranavalona I as it is possible for two people to be. One will always be remembered as the "*cruel* Ranavalona," the other as the "*good* Ranavalona." And we are glad to remember that whilst the former worshipped idols, the latter was a sincere follower of Jesus Christ.

The boys and girls who read this book will be pleased to know

that when a girl, Ranavalona II was a pupil at an L.M.S. school. No doubt she there learnt much which helped her in future days. It is



QUEEN RASOHERINA.

said that the first to speak to her about Jesus was one of the four nobles of whom you have read as being burnt alive at Faravohitra.



CANOPY USED AT THE CORONA-
TION OF RANAVALONA II.
THE QUEEN IS RANAVALONA III.

Ranavalona was a sweet, loving girl, tender-hearted and kind to those who were in trouble.

The young princess was very sorry for the persecuted Christians,



PALACE CHURCH BUILT BY RANAVALONA II.

and secretly did whatever she could to help them. Sometimes she went to their meetings. On one occasion she had been out in the early morning to worship; it was chilly, and she was wet with the dew. She surprised an old woman by asking permission to dry her

clothes by the grass fire. Looking at the princess very affectionately, the old lady inquired where she had been at that hour of the day, when Ranavalona answered that she had been to a little meeting of the Christians, to which the old woman replied with tears in her eyes, "The Lord prosper you in your seeking after Him thus."



ENTRANCE TO AMBATONAKANGA CHURCH.

Ranavalona II was badly marked with small-pox, caught through her kindness in visiting those who were ill of the same complaint.

Her constant thought for the poor and the sick, her gracious, gentle manner, made her a general favourite, and when she ultimately became queen there was great rejoicing.

On the very morning she was proclaimed queen, she sent a message

to the missionaries, saying that they would have perfect freedom in carrying on their good work. What a glad day that was in Antananarivo, and how very different from some of the days we remember in the reign of the cruel Ranavalona I.

The coronation was looked forward to with delighted excitement. When the queen appeared, wearing a lovely dress and looking very regal, she sat under a canopy, on which were written in large, golden letters these words in the Malagasy language :—

“Glory to God in the Highest”; “Peace on earth”; “Good will towards men”; “God be with us.”

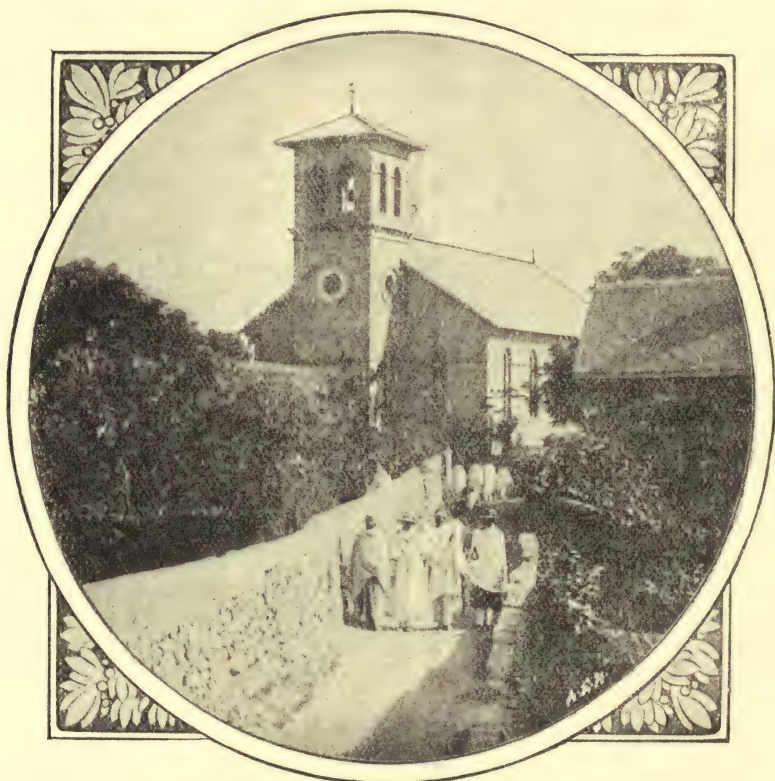
In place of the idols, she had a large Bible standing on a small table at her side, and as she spoke to her people she placed her hand on the Bible, and said that she rested her kingdom on God. The queen declared herself a Christian, and though she said that all had perfect religious liberty, she wished her people might see as she did.

It seems to have been the custom for a new sovereign to have built an additional palace. Queen Ranavalona II had a very handsome church built in the palace yard, as well as a new palace.

A year after becoming queen, Ranavalona II and the Prime Minister were publicly baptized, though it is believed that the queen had long been a Christian. She attended service regularly, listening attentively to the reading of the scriptures and to the sermon.

Soon dawned one of the great days in the history of Madagascar. By order of the good queen the national idols were publicly burnt, showing that she neither trusted nor feared them. Thousands of smaller gods and charms were likewise destroyed, whilst the poor heathen looked on trembling and wondering what evil thing would happen to them.

The queen was very generous. It was her custom at the monthly communion service to give £20 for the poor, and every month she sent £50 or £60 to the city pastors, asking that it might be given to needy village churches, or in helping to build new ones in the country.



"THE CHILDREN'S CHURCH," FARAVOHITRA.

Ranavalona II believed very sincerely in prayer, which was the secret of her noble life. She never undertook to do anything, however small, without first praying for guidance ; and it is said that when ill, she would even pray before taking her medicine.

During this time the missionaries and native Christian workers were very busy indeed. New chapels and schools were erected, and young and old were eager to learn.

In the reign of Radama II arrangements were made to build five substantial stone churches on the sacred spots where the martyrs had suffered, and the first church was finished in the reign of Rasoherina. English friends sent the money needed, whilst the Malagasy, rich and poor alike, gave time and labour freely.

The other four churches were completed in the reign of Ranavalona II.

The Rev. James Sibree, F.R.G.S., who after more than *forty* years of loving, faithful service for the Malagasy is still at work in Antanana-

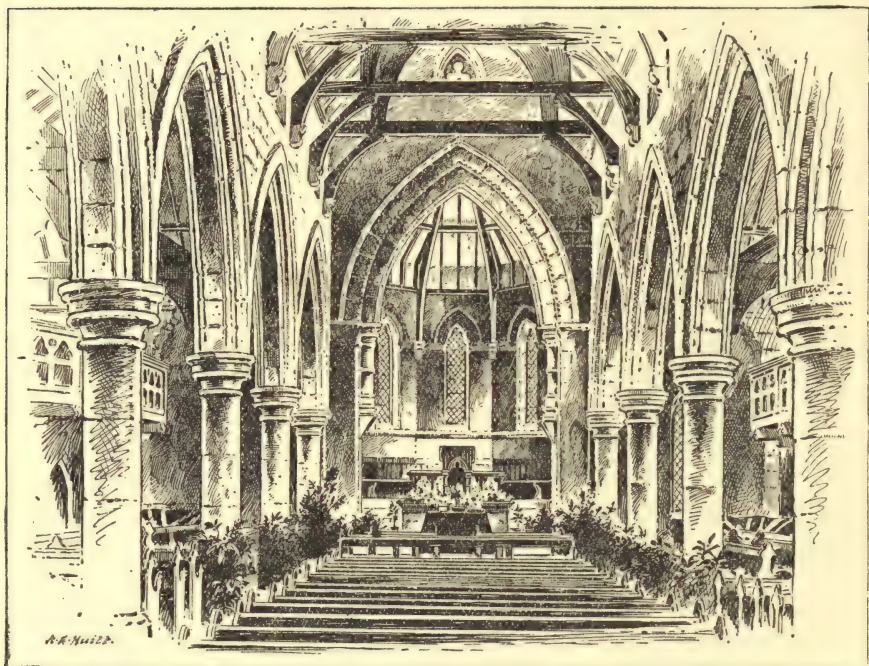


AMBOHIPOTSY CHURCH.

rivo, went out to superintend the building of what we now call the "Martyr Memorial Churches." He was an architect, and knew all about putting up handsome churches. But the Malagasy knew nothing of building, and Mr. Sibree needed very much patience, as he

watched nearly every stone chiselled and placed in some of the churches. There to-day these Memorial Churches stand, a perpetual reminder of the love of the English Christians for the Malagasy people.

One of these is called the "*Children's Church.*" And you will be glad to know the reason. All the money required for building it was



INTERIOR OF AMBOHIPOTSY CHURCH (DECORATED FOR A MISSIONARY'S WEDDING).

collected by English children—boys and girls like you. This stands on that sacred spot where the four nobles were burnt alive. We missionaries feel very proud of that church, when we remember those who sent the money for the building. Even the bell in the tower was sent from England. In those days there were very few clocks in

Madagascar, so a church bell was very useful indeed. Much of the cost of the bell was realized by all paying one penny who wished to



REV. J. SIBREE, F.R.G.S., AND A GROUP OF NATIVES.

ring it ; so it was rung many times before it reached Faravohitra. I wish we knew how to get hundreds of pennies nowadays to help the Malagasy.

Ambohipotsy church, though the second to be finished, was the first opened after Ranavalona II came to the throne. She attended the ceremony with the Prime Minister and her court. This church was erected very near to the spot where Rasalama, the *first* martyr, was speared to death. The church is beautiful in appearance and perfectly built, and after bearing the storms of forty years, looks capable of surviving many more.

You will notice that Ambatonakanga Church has a high spire, though not quite so tall as that of Ambohipotsy. I have heard that as the spire got higher and higher, the wives of the builders became alarmed, and used to go and beg Mr. Sibree to have their husbands excused.

No wonder the last stone was placed with great thanksgiving, and a little service held by the workers to thank God that such a huge piece of work had been accomplished without a single serious accident.

On p. 79 is a picture of Mr. Sibree with some of his workpeople sitting at one of the doors of the Ambohipotsy church. The tall figure in the background is Rainimanga, the *present* pastor of the church. He was one of those who suffered in the dark days; he is now very old, but he loves to talk of past days, and is a very interesting character.

On the opposite page is a photograph of the church which was built at the "Rock of Hurling," or, as we call it, the Ampamarinana Church. Here the Rev. B. and Mrs. Briggs preached and taught from its opening until a few years ago (nearly forty years), when they were very tired and obliged to rest in England.

Another very important piece of work commenced in the reign of Ranavalona II was a new translation of the Bible. Many missionaries, a few of whom were not L.M.S., worked very hard at this, and they were

splendidly assisted by three natives. But the chief reviser was our honoured missionary, the Rev. W. E. Cousins, M.A. His photograph is given on p. 82. For fourteen years he gave six or eight hours each day to this work, and the Malagasy now possess one of the finest



AMPAMARINANA CHURCH.

versions of the Bible in the world. That was a great work to do was it not ?

In the midst of all this glorious work, beloved by all her people, Queen Ranavalona II died, after reigning fifteen years. Few queens have done as much good as she did, and she is remembered as the "gentlest of Malagasy women, and the most gracious of queens." Strange to say, she was buried in the same grave as the cruel Ranavalona. As her body was carried to the place of the royal graves at



REV. W. E. COUSINS, M.A.

Ambohimanga, twelve miles from Antananarivo, the road was lined with people, sorrowing because of the death of their noble queen.

As Ranavalona II lay dying, she thoughtfully asked that the old customs should not be kept up, as she wanted no "fuss." The people must have been very pleased about this, especially as when other sovereigns had died, they had been compelled to do some very ridiculous things; one, for example, being that all, both men and women, should shave the hair from their heads.

It was like the kind, good Ranavalona to put an end to those things which in any way troubled her people, as far as she possibly could, and no wonder she is still lovingly remembered and her name revered.

CHAPTER VII

THE FRENCH CONQUER MADAGASCAR

VERY sincerely do I hope that those who read this book may never be obliged to live in a country where war is carried on.

We should be very glad, I think, that our own King is known as the Peacemaker. It is one of the noblest titles any one can bear even though he be a king.

We English have carried on so many wars ourselves, that we cannot very fairly find fault with those who do the same thing, however wrong we may think it to be.

For some years previous to 1894 and 1895 there was much unrest and sorrow in Madagascar. The country was in a very unsatisfactory state. The queen, Ranavalona III, niece and successor of the good Ranavalona, was an earnest Christian, and desired nothing more than the true prosperity of her people. But she was surrounded by officials, many of whom were selfish and greedy, and there was much discontent in the land on this account. Added to this, the French made claims upon the Malagasy Government which the latter thought unjust, and consequently refused. The French Government, not liking this, declared war against Madagascar, and a short time afterwards their troops landed at Mojanga, on the western coast.

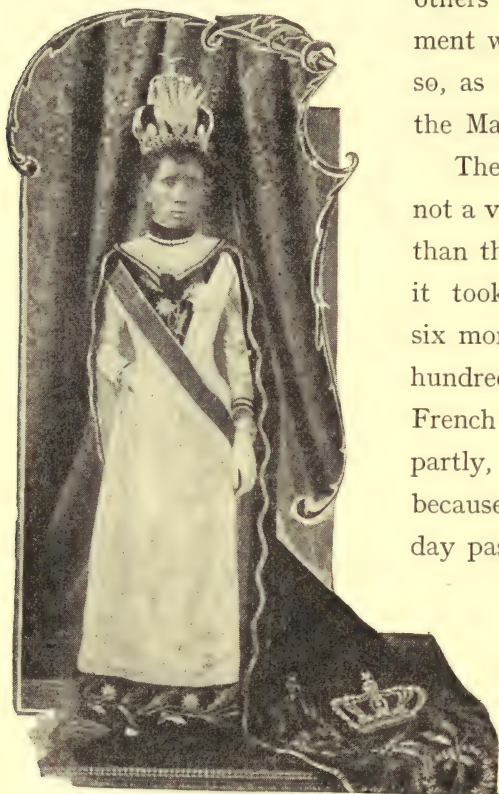
There was not much fighting, for the Malagasy army was badly

organized, and the majority had little heart for the struggle. Hundreds thought that the French must simply die in their endeavour to reach the capital, for the roads were difficult and the climate bad ;

others felt that their own Government was not worth fighting for, and so, as the enemy slowly advanced, the Malagasy retreated.

The journey to the capital was not a very long one, though farther than the one from Tamatave ; but it took the French forces five or six months to accomplish it. Not hundreds, but thousands of poor French soldiers died by the way, partly, as the Malagasy expected, because of the climate. Never a day passed when new graves were

not dug by the roadside, and many were the homes in " beautiful France " made sad because father, husband, son or brother had fallen in far-away Madagascar.



QUEEN RANAVALONA III.

Each morning as the day dawned, and each evening at the setting of the sun, Malagasy women gathered together their children and their slaves and sang what they called the "*Mirary*" or Prayer Song. I often saw little groups thus engaged, and heard the chanting of

their plaintive song. This is the translation of part of one verse :—

May you protect them, O Lord !
May they succeed in their effort !
May the spear have no chance to hit them !
Or the rifle have any harm for them.
May they capture their enemy !
Whether they are fighting in the morning or evening,
May they succeed in defeating their enemy.

Their great-grandmothers used to sing a similar song in the old days when there was war amongst the tribes.

How heavy were our hearts ! We sorrowed with the mothers, wives and children away in France who lost their loved ones ; and we grieved for the poor Malagasy who were about to lose their country and their freedom, and yet did not realize it.

During the war the missionaries often wondered how best they could be spiritually helpful to the people. Services were held on Sundays as usual, classes conducted, and schools kept open as long as possible.

Often we were many days in suspense : news travelled slowly, for there was no telegraph and no proper post.

One day, towards the middle of September, word came to Antananarivo that the French soldiers were now only twenty-five miles away, and might enter the city any minute. We wondered if the Malagasy army would make a brave stand at the last in defending the capital, and whether or not there would be a battle.

Some of us, seeing we could no longer carry on our work, decided to go to friends in the country, and we fled from our house that evening. It was grievous to leave behind the home that was so " sweet,"

with much we valued in it ; but that was a *very* small thing compared with what others had to bear.

As we cautiously travelled along in the night, we could see in the distance a bright, lurid light in the sky which was the reflection from the Malagasy camp fires ; and not far from that a clearer, brighter light which showed where the French were camping. Sometimes we



THE PALACE OF THE QUEEN.

passed in a lonely part of the road a group of men, to whom we politely said, "*Veloma, tompoko ê*" ("Good-night, sirs"), but they did not reply as usual, either being too grieved or too angry. Then a river was crossed, and soon we reached a mission station ; but the missionary had that day gone to friends further on by request of the kind queen, who felt the lonely lady missionary (Miss Hinchliffe, of the Friends' Mission) was no longer safe there.

Next day we journeyed on again, my husband on horseback, I in my palanquin, and before evening we came to the house of other Quaker friends (Mr. and Mrs. Johnson), who seemed quite glad to see us, and to have a little company in such troublous days. Here we also found the lady in whose house we had taken shelter the night



PALACE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

before, and in a few days other missionaries joined us from another part of the country, so we were quite a large party.

Most of the remaining L.M.S. and F.F.M.A. missionaries (F.F.M.A. means Friends' Foreign Mission Association) took up their abode at the Mission Hospital, which was a little distance from the city.

On Sunday, September 29, the French were within sight of Antananarivo. The queen in her palace was weeping and begging that the fighting might cease, for though it meant the giving up of her country, she saw there was now no help for that, as her soldiers were quite incapable of resistance, and said she, "I cannot bear this bloodshed." Over and over again she was seen to enter the palace chapel, and all knew that the sad queen was pouring out her trouble before God.

On the day following, eager eyes were turned towards the palace, where the Malagasy flag still waved, for until that was lowered the fighting must continue. The General of the French army grew impatient. He did not wish to be cruel, and in order to show the Malagasy how useless it was for them to hold out any longer, he ordered a shell to be fired near the palace itself. Poor little queen! The shell burst in the palace yard, where hundreds of nobles with their slaves were assembled, and instantly scores fell, and probably fifty were mortally wounded. These Malagasy had never seen anything so dreadful, and they were indeed terrified.

Again the queen implored, and finally insisted that the flag should be removed, and those who were watching saw it slowly moving, until at last it was hurled to the ground, and the Malagasy were conquered! It was a blessing that Ranavalona had been so persistent. The flag was lowered at 3.30 p.m., and that was the time the French General had fixed for storming the capital. Not one, but doubtless many, shells would have been poured into Antananarivo, with great loss of life and property, if further resistance had been offered.

Instead, word went through the French forces to stop firing, and there was instant silence. Soon two Malagasy men, bearing a

white flag of peace, were seen walking towards the great French General. French soldiers who had tramped long, weary miles and seen a greater number of their comrades die by the way than those who remained to rejoice with them, were glad the war was over; the Malagasy, though they grieved at losing their country, were for the moment relieved.

It was soon discovered that quite a number of the French soldiers were seriously ill. Fortunately for them they were near the mission



THE HOSPITAL.

hospital, where they were speedily admitted, gently cared for, and skilfully nursed by the English medical missionaries in charge and their native staff.

In a few days the missionaries were in their respective homes again and hard at work, hoping that better days were now in store for all.

The poor ignorant Malagasy who lived in the country, however, were very unhappy. They had often heard of war, for in the by-

gone days the various tribes were constantly quarrelling. Those who were slaves remembered how they or their parents were the captives of some former fight, and they wondered what now might befall them at the hands of the French.

I must tell you that when the natives thus fought it was the custom of the tribe who won the battle to kill *all* the men of the conquered party, and to take the women and children as slaves. So now there was great anxiety throughout the country. Many of the women expected that they and their children would be sent as slaves across the seas, and that all the men would be put to death as in the olden days. They did not know that theirs was only a heathen practice.

You should try to remember the name of the victorious French General, because he was so kind and thoughtful for the Malagasy, and especially for Queen Ranavalona III. General Duchesne was his name, and one of the first things he did after entering Antananarivo was to order his soldiers to treat the Malagasy well, and especially the women. Wasn't that different from the old heathen way?

The city now presented a smart appearance. Soldiers in their varied uniforms were busy, French officers in gay costumes rode backwards and forwards on horseback arranging for their troops; a brisk business was carried on in the big market day by day, and the wayside stalls were thronged from morning to night. Conquerors and conquered seemed friendly; college and schools were opened again, mission work went on as before.

Alas! after a few brief weeks all was changed, and new troubles commenced which proved even sadder than the war itself for the Malagasy, and especially for the Christians.

CHAPTER VIII

REBELLION—MURDERS AND NARROW ESCAPES

IT must be remembered that only a part of Madagascar has yet been under the influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that even in those districts where the missionary has now been at work many years, some of the Christians are very weak indeed. But in England and Wales, where the Gospel has been preached for *hundreds* of years *all over the land*, we find people who are very disappointing, so it is not surprising that the poor Malagasy still need much help and great patience.

As you read this next part of my story, I am sure you will feel exceedingly sorry for them, and wish we might do more to help and uplift them.

Soon after the French soldiers reached Antananarivo the country folk began talking together, not only of what might happen to them at the hands of their conquerors, but also of how their land was really lost to them, and discussing the reason why. Had they been perfectly honest about the causes of their defeat they would have said that the Malagasy army never did its best ; that many of the officers had been selfish ; and even if all, both officers and men, had done their utmost (though they might perhaps have kept the enemy out

of the country for some years), a powerful nation like the French must ultimately have conquered.

But that was not how these people looked at the matter. The



GROUP OF CHARMS.

1. Used when wading through a river infested with crocodiles.
2. Betsileo charm. Prayed to by the people when wanting riches, health and other good gifts.
3. "Holy" wood and piece of a crocodile's tooth. Wood grated, and the dust put into a little water and drunk as a charm against disease.
4. From the Sakalava country. Used like No. 2.

heathen said :

“ We know quite well how it is. We have been allowing the Christians to worship the God of the white man, and our gods are naturally jealous and displeased with us ; and so, instead of aiding us in this war, they have punished us by letting the foreigner take our country.”

The spirit of discontent and anger grew day by day, until at length the large heathen population to the west of the capital became furious, and decided that all the

white people, whether French or English, should be murdered, and



A SAKALAVA CHIEF.

the native Christian workers with them. This they thought would gratify their idols, who would then restore to them their country.

Various gods, which through shame or fear had been hidden for

years, were brought from their hiding-places and publicly worshipped; charms were worn once more, especially the war-charm by the men, which was a kind of small horn decorated with beads.

Forming a large, excited band—in fact, a small army—these ignorant, deluded creatures set off towards Antananarivo, looking savage indeed with their spears and other weapons.

Sad to tell, the first European house to which they came

was the one where six weeks before we had been sheltering with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson of the F.F.M.A. (see p. 87).

It was between seven and eight o'clock in the morning. Break-



MR. AND MRS. JOHNSON.

fast was about to be served in the missionary's home. The day was bright and sunny, the flowers in the garden were glorious in the morning light, when into the compound rushed thousands of infuriated Malagasy. That peaceful, orderly home was soon thrown into sad confusion when the leaders burst into the house demanding money.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson had a dear little girl, "Blossom," only five years of age, and you may imagine how frightened she was when she saw these wild-looking natives.

Mr. Johnson gave all the money he possessed ; but this did not satisfy the rebels, who next brutally murdered him in the presence of his wife. It is said that Mrs. Johnson then went away into the garden with little "Blossom," and that for a time there was a long discussion as to whether or not the mother and child should also be speared to death. Many of the men had wives and little girls too, and they seem to have been ashamed of taking the life of this dear, gentle lady who had always been so kind, tenderly nursing the sick, cheering the sad, and giving always of her best. But Satan had his way ; the wicked spirit which was in the men conquered, and Mrs. Johnson and sweet little "Blossom" soon lay dying amid the lovely flowers which the reckless rebels had ruthlessly trodden under foot.

The house was next plundered ; even the windows were removed, and then the building was set on fire. In a few hours one of the pleasant spots of earth was rendered a scene of desolation. The town and neighbourhood of Arivonimamo (where Mr. and Mrs. Johnson lived) are uninteresting and bare, but Mrs. Johnson had turned the mission compound into a little paradise by the flowers she had tended with such care. Her home, as we know from experience, was per-

vaded by the sweetest of spirits, and to be with her and Mr. Johnson was indeed a delight and a privilege : nothing but love seemed to reign in that home and to flow from it. But now the house was a ruin, the garden was a wreck, and there lay the sacred bodies of father, mother and little child. But God's own garden was made more beautiful by the transplanting of these rare treasures. Comparatively few have lived such noble, unselfish, gracious lives as Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, and so God honoured them by allowing them to be martyrs for His sake.

Hitherto only the Malagasy had been martyrs for Christ in Madagascar ; now the names of William, Lucy and " Blossom " Johnson were added to the illustrious roll.

On that same morning, good Dr. Wilson¹ (also of the Friends' Mission) left Antananarivo before daybreak. He had heard that the wife of another missionary, whose home was forty miles beyond Arivonimamo, had been ill for a week, and he set out hoping to get breakfast with Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, and then travel on to the lonely station of Mandridrano.

Overlooking Arivonimamo is a high hill about three-quarters of an hour's journey from the mission house. From that point Arivonimamo is first seen in approaching it from the capital. As Dr. Wilson reached the summit about nine o'clock, that November 22, 1895, he was astonished to see the mission station in flames.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were not only personal friends of his, but they belonged to the same mission ; and in great anxiety the doctor,

¹ Dr. Wilson is now Secretary of the Friends' Foreign Missionary Association.

who was on horseback, hurried on towards the little town. He saw crowds of men in the distance, and soon discovered that they were angry heathen; but being a very brave man, he never dreamt of



LARGE STONE AT THE ENTRANCE OF A VILLAGE.

turning round to save his own life, but galloped on to rescue, if possible, the lives of his friends. When within five minutes' walk of the house, some Malagasy who loved the doctor, being unable to persuade him to return (though they told him that his friends were already massacred

and that he must be killed if he went further), took his horse by the bridle and *forced* him to ride away.

"Merrylegs," for that was the horse's name, had travelled twenty-eight miles that morning, but he seemed to understand that danger was near ; and his head being turned, he swiftly bore his master back towards the hill.

The rebels were like wild animals who had tasted blood and wanted more, and scores rushed after the doctor and his faithful steed with all their might. A difficult little place lay in the way, and here it seemed as if they *must* succeed. A small stream had to be crossed, and the bank leading down to it on the one side, and that rising up from it on the other, were very steep and awkward—difficult for two legs to scramble down and up again, but how much more so for four ! Feeling that they had the doctor already in their grip, the trying place was reached, and the rebels yelled out "*Azonay ! azonay !*" really meaning " We've got him, we've got him ! " But, happily, they were mistaken, and getting on to easy ground again, though for a few minutes with only eight or ten yards between the doctor and his pursuers, " Merrylegs " seemed inspired, and soon carried his master far away and out of reach of the enemy.

When out of sight of the infuriated mob the doctor rested and tried to form some plan of action. He was not the sort of man to hurry home if there were the least thing to be done first for his friends. As he sat there thinking, he could scarcely realize that Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were dead, and little Blossom, too ! Perhaps, he thought, they were only wounded ; and, being a doctor, he could dress their wounds, and bring them back to life and health. So he hid in a native hut, determined that later on, when the rebels dispersed, he

would return to Arivonimamo. A faithful servant was with the doctor. He procured a "lamba" and a native hat for his master, and so, partially disguised, the doctor waited for some opportunity of rendering service to his friends. Meanwhile, "Merrylegs" was getting a little rest.

Towards evening a funeral procession came along, slowly walking in the direction of Arivonimamo. The doctor, dressed as a Malagasy, and under cover of the shades of evening, quietly joined the party, and walked with them as if belonging to or sympathizing with them. But when quite near the mission station again, the doctor became uncomfortably conscious that side-looks were being given him, and that the group of mourners or their friends were suspicious, and so falling in the rear, he by and by hid in a gutter by the roadside, simply lying flat and quiet there. He still hoped to reach the mission compound; the house clearly was in ruins. He even thought he might find the bodies of his friends, and, if dead, perform the sacred duty of burying them. But soon he found it wise and necessary to go no farther; he was being searched for in every village near, and a price had been put on his head!

Before the doctor left his place of hiding the servant had been to the mission station, and had found out that the Johnsons were both dead, and that some faithful teachers had buried their bodies.

Stealthily master and servant went along the road in search of "Merrylegs." The doctor saw that the best and only thing to do was to get to Antananarivo as quickly as possible; and seeing he was being looked for all along the route, he decided to travel all night, avoiding the proper road, but crossing rice fields, ditches, and whatever lay in the path. It was half-past ten next morning when the

doctor, his good servant, and the faithful "Merrylegs" reached the capital. News of the murder of the Johnsons had been received the night before, and all were thankful when the doctor himself arrived, for many feared he, too, was murdered.

* * * * *

But what about the poor sick lady whom the doctor purposed visiting away in Mandridrano?

The rebels had first intended pressing on to Antananarivo. But they changed their plans and arranged to divide into three parties, one going to the L.M.S. station at Ambôhibilômà, where Mr. Stribling was all alone; another to Mandridrano, where was the sick lady, her husband and three little children; and a third to Raimainandro, where was a missionary, his wife and family, belonging to yet another English missionary society, called the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.).

Mr. Stribling was quickly informed of what had happened, and of the intentions of this heathen army. Happily he safely escaped to the city, though not without risk of life, and much danger. It was another relief to the mission band in the capital when he arrived on the Sunday night.

Two of the rebels who knew the missionary (Mr. Standing) at Mandridrano, his wife and children, could not bear to think that their friends were also to be barbarously put to death; and so whilst their companions were resting, they stole quietly off to warn them. Was not that very brave of those two poor heathen? It certainly showed that some of the rebels were not so bad as they seemed.

Imagine then another missionary's home. It was Sunday morning (the Johnsons had been murdered on the Friday before). Mrs. Stand-

ing was much better. For the first time after many days the fever had left her, but she was very weak indeed. The missionary was thinking of going some miles away to preach in one of the country churches; the three children were very happy because mother was to get up a little that day, perhaps after father came back, or maybe she would be up to give him a welcome on his return.

Towards seven o'clock, just as breakfast was ready, the two men, tired and dirty-looking, walked up to the house and asked for the missionary. They told him of what had taken place, and how they, unknown to their companions, but out of love for him and his family, had trudged those forty miles in order to beg him to escape.

That was a long, sad day at the mission house. It was useless to flee away in the daytime. The missionary and his wife took counsel together, cheering one another up as well as they could, and asking God to guard them from harm, and especially their three little children. They spoke to their servants and one or two trusted native friends of what they had heard, and quietly made arrangements for stealing away that night, if not too late.

Father and mother wrote loving letters to their children in England, fearing that these might be their last.

In the afternoon they saw from their windows five little churches burning in the distance, which was a sign that the people of those villages would join the rebellion.

Towards evening, when food, blankets and a few other things were packed, the children had their faces blackened to help in disguising them. They did not cry as many would have done, but just did exactly what father and mother told them, which was their habit, and so made things much easier.

When it was quite dark the servants carried a palanquin to a certain place a short distance from the house. This was for the use of the sick lady, the mother. She must ride, but the others would have to do as well as they could. By and by, dressed as a Malagasy woman, Mrs. Standing left her home, supported by a native teacher, who most truly showed himself the friend of the missionary. Reaching the palanquin, she seated herself, and then servants or friends carried her along. The children were carried in Malagasy fashion, each inside a "lamba" on the back of a native. The father and another missionary, shoeless, that no traces might be left behind, also left the mission station, and all set out in the dark night for some place of refuge.

The rain poured, the thunder roared, and the only light to show the narrow, difficult path was the bright, vivid lightning. What a terrible night !

After hours of toilsome travelling, wet through, hungry and tired, the weary party came to a village which was the home of the good teacher who had assisted Mrs. Standing so kindly when she left the house, and who was still their guide. The difficulty was, how to reach the teacher's house without being heard ; for a cough, the slightest sound of any description, might disturb a dog or rouse a villager, and all would be discovered ! Their entrance into that village and their presence there must not be known on any account. One by one they passed through the gate, then entered the house, climbed the awkward staircase, and our friends were hidden away in a sort of loft in the roof of the house. A fire was made of grass ; rice was cooked ; clothing dried a little ; a simple meal was eaten, the children having signs given not to let their spoons touch their plates for fear

of that disturbing some one. Then in the early hours of the morning, each, wrapped up in a blanket, lay down on the mud floor trying to



WARRIORS, DECORATED WITH THEIR VARIOUS CHARMS.

get some rest, and not knowing what danger awaited them on the morrow.

Next day the missionary heard that the rebels were searching

for native teachers as well as for white people, and that, therefore, it was most unsafe for the party to shelter longer where they were. Hiding all through the day, not daring even for one moment to leave that small, upper room, the long hours were passed. Happily for all, the children behaved splendidly, sitting as still as little mice, and without making the least sound. It is lovely to think that in this they not only helped in saving their own lives, but even the lives of father and mother and the other missionary who was with them depended in no small measure on the conduct of those three brave, obedient children.

Next night they left the village as stealthily as they had entered it, and set out again in the darkness in search of some retreat. This time they journeyed towards the desert, and after hours of travelling, came to a solitary house where two women lived, and here they got shelter.

Some days afterwards news came that the missionary might return home with his wife and family, for the governor of Mandridrano and his people had resisted the rebels, and that the latter were on their way to Antananarivo.

To show appreciation of the governor, the missionary party returned. It was felt, however, that they were unsafe in such a lonely part of the country. Soldiers, after some delay, were sent by the Government to bring them up to the capital. The road was full of danger, and only a short distance could be travelled each day. Night by night the children with father and mother lay down on mud floors, the room being so small and so horribly dirty that sleep was often impossible. One night they had to stay in the village of Arivonimamo, and there they saw the ruins of the dear old mission house where

they, with us and others, had taken refuge not many weeks before.

With what excitement we awaited the arrival of our friends in Antananarivo ! Often we had feared they were dead, when day after day had passed and no news was heard of them.

One Saturday morning a messenger came with a note, which said something like this : “ We hope to arrive soon. Will you send us a little bread ? We have tasted nothing of the kind for many days. We are very tired, but well.”

Never was a box of provisions packed with more joy, and it was specially delightful putting in some cake for the children ! With what rejoicing the travellers were received into our home not long afterwards no words can tell.

Perhaps you have been wondering what happened to the third family that I referred to.

It was in the night when they heard of the murder of the Johnsons and the approach of the enemy. Jumping from their beds, they set off just as they were towards the home of a Norwegian missionary, which was still further away in the country. They had many long miles to travel, and were footsore for want of boots and stockings, when ultimately they reached the mission station, where they were given food, clothing and shelter, and cared for most kindly. Their house was burnt to the ground, and all that they possessed lost ; but their lives happily were preserved.

Unfortunately the rebels grew in number, and the rebellion spread to many parts of the country—north, south, east and west.

What *did* puzzle the rebels, however, was this, that though they

wore their war-charms, whenever they came in contact with the French soldiers the bullets took effect, thus showing that the charms had no power.

Away fifty miles to the south of Antananarivo a terrible tragedy nearly took place just at this time.

For many years Norwegian missionaries have lived in Madagascar,



FIANARANTSOA.

and they have done a splendid work. It is their custom to have an annual conference, and as the rebellion seemed to be abating, the missionaries decided to have their meetings at Fianarantsoa, which, as you remember, is the capital of the Betsileo district.

As the homes of these Norwegian missionaries were much scattered about, many miles separating one from the other, it was thought unwise to leave the ladies alone at their respective mission stations ;

so whilst the husbands went to Fianarantsoa, the wives and little children, with some young ladies, gathered together at a place called Antsirabè, which lies about a hundred miles north of Fianarantsoa and fifty south of Antananarivo. Two sick gentlemen who were too ill to attend the meetings joined the ladies. The mission party consisted of sixteen ladies and young girls, nine children and the two gentlemen.

The rebels heard of the conference, and that the ladies were staying at Antsirabe. When the missionaries were assembled at Fianarantsoa, the rebels cowardly planned to attack Antsirabe and to massacre the whole party.

A friendly native hearing of this informed the ladies, who at once gathered in the only house with a tiled roof, which could not be set on fire by the enemy. Here they were joined by five French subjects (three being sergeants of the French army), thirty-five native soldiers, and a few other Malagasy.

It was ten o'clock on Monday morning when the rebel band appeared. They were 1,500 in number, and looked more like savage animals than anything else. They shouted and made most hideous noises as they waved their spears and other weapons in the air.

Here in Antsirabe was a large leper settlement, where some of the Norwegian ladies had for many years lovingly nursed scores of poor lepers. Surely *that* would be left alone. No ! even the suffering lepers, whom the most cruel might pity, were turned out of their hospital. The church was destroyed, and as some of the rebels pulled down the pulpit they cried out, "Where is now their God ?"

The French soldiers had very few cartridges. During two days they used them sparingly, showing throughout the greatest courage

and wisdom. On the third day, when the whole village was a picture of desolation, those terrible rebels gathered wood together and piled it round the mission house. The last, or nearly the last, cartridge had been used, and by and by it seemed as if the rebels would witness



STREET IN ANTANANARIVO, SHOWING PASTEUR ESCANDE, WHO WAS MURDERED DURING THE REBELLION.

a tragedy such as had not been seen even in the days of the cruel Ranavalona.

But what is that dark spot on the horizon? Pausing in their acts of barbarism they eagerly watched, until soon the small spot grew larger, and a detachment of French soldiers was seen hurrying towards Antsirabe. A cry was raised, and immediately the rebels

rushed in the opposite direction, leaving the prisoners to wonder what was the real cause of their flight.

I wonder if any one thought of those words uttered as the pulpit was destroyed : “ Where is now their God ? ” Many earnest prayers had ascended to heaven from that mission house during those dreadful days, and God had indeed heard them, and now they were answered.

Other missionaries were in great peril during these sad days in Madagascar, and sometimes it was feared that the rebels would be strong enough in numbers to enter the capital and murder all the members of the various missions gathered there.

Hundreds of country churches were burnt to the ground. Teachers, evangelists and other native Christians had to flee for their lives ; some had to live for months in the forest, often hungry for want of proper food ; others were cruelly put to death because they would not give up the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amongst those who suffered death were a number of Frenchmen, including two noble French Protestant missionaries—Monsieur B. Escande and Monsieur P. Minault. My next chapter will tell you of one of the heroes of these days.

As what I have told you in this chapter happened only ten or eleven years ago, you will see how very much Madagascar needs more missionaries. I hope you are feeling that she needs *your* prayers and all the help you can give her. I know boys and girls can do such splendid things when they are in earnest.

CHAPTER IX

A MALAGASY HERO

WHEN first I went to Madagascar, one of the things which made me saddest was to see a leper sitting by the roadside begging. This used to be a very common thing ; but I am glad to tell you that the French Government has now established " homes " for hundreds of these poor sufferers, where they are fed, clothed and well cared for. I frequently visit one of these institutions where no less than 400 lepers are living.

Perhaps the worst thing about leprosy is, that it cannot be cured. That must be very trying for the nurses, too, because whatever care they bestow upon their patients they never have the satisfaction and pleasure of seeing one getting better ; but day by day the poor things grow worse and worse, sometimes extremely slowly, until they die.

But you must not imagine that all the lepers are miserable. Some few are really happy, and I expect you know the reason. They have heard of the love of Jesus, and they in turn love Him, and this has made their hearts quite glad.

I have rarely, if ever, admired a lady quite so much as the good French Protestant sister who is at the head of the leper establishment

above mentioned. She and another "sister" live at Mânankàvây, and there they spend their lives in nursing and caring for these four hundred Malagasy lepers. Day by day they dress the wounds of the sick, washing the hands and feet of the lepers with their own gentle, loving, skilful hands. The sister knows that we are all happier if we have something to do, and that the really miserable people are not lepers, but people who have nothing to do, and especially nothing to do for others. And so she has a school for the children (yes! little children are sometimes lepers in our country), and the most capable patient teaches them, and I expect he often enjoys it so much that he forgets he is a leper. The women who are not too ill help in the nursing, and make garments for all; and the men cultivate the land; so that all, excepting those who are very, very ill, have some occupation. True, their faces are often disfigured, but many of them are bright and happy looking.

Now I think it is very pleasant for us to know that one of our own L.M.S. missionaries (Rev. P. G. Peake) was one of the first to think of a leper home for the Malagasy, and it was at Mânankàvây he established it, and there for many years that he gave much time and attention to these poor sufferers. In fact, it is only since the French Government took over the work of lepers in Imerina that Mr. Peake has given it up.

Far away in Fianarantsoa is another leper settlement. This is under the care of Mrs. Hockett, also of the L.M.S. It would require a whole chapter to tell you of the loving devotion of this kind lady to "her lepers"; of the number whom she has taught to love Jesus; of the lives changed from sorrow and sadness into joy and sunshine. But we are so glad to have missionaries who do such noble work, and

we know the heart of Jesus rejoices in it, for when He saw the leper, He was "moved with compassion," He "touched" and healed him.

There are hundreds of lepers in Madagascar. I should like you to think of them sometimes, and then I am sure you would wish to ask Jesus to help them.

Once when travelling in a very lonely part of the country with



MRS. HUCKETT'S LEPER SETTLEMENT.

my husband and a friend, we suddenly came across a poor man sitting by the roadside. He looked so thin and ill, and though the morning was quite chilly (for it was the cold season), he had nothing around him but an old, thin, dirty, calico "lamba." Oh! how sad we felt, especially when we discovered that he was a leper. He was really a slave, too, but his master, finding that he was suffering from leprosy, turned him adrift. What could be sadder? The hovel in which he lived would not be considered by any of you as fit habitation for a

pig. The framework was of wood, and this was covered with sods. The highest part was a little over a yard high, so that every time the man entered his hut he had simply to crawl in. When inside he could sit or lie on the cold ground, but he could not stand, for he was much taller than the hut itself. Whenever he cooked a little rice the place



HOVEL LIKE THE ONE IN WHICH THE POOR LEPER LIVED.

was full of smoke, and this must have irritated the many sores on his body.

Perhaps you can imagine a little of how full of sorrow our hearts were as we looked at this lonely, friendless man. We wished there was some one to teach him of the Friend Who never forsakes us. We tried to comfort and cheer him, but then we were many, many miles from home, and our time was so limited. Some years after when

we heard the poor leper was dead we were really glad, for his life was lonely and dark. Could we have known that this was a solitary case it would have been much easier to bear. But oh ! there are so many sick, suffering people in Madagascar, and thousands of them have never heard of the loving Jesus, and so their lives are hopeless and gloomy. Would you not like when you are grown up to go out and teach some of them ? Or, supposing for some great reason, you could not possibly go yourself, would you not like to give all the money you could spare in helping to send some one else who could go ? You know I think, and I think it very often, that the most miserable people are those who never give to help others, those who lead selfish, narrow lives, without a thought for the poor, suffering, sad heathen. I should not like you to be hard, and thoughtless, and miserable like that when you are men and women ; but I should like you to be beautiful like the sunshine, cheering all around you, and taking your sunshine, if possible, to those who sit in heathen darkness.

But now I must introduce you to my hero. Perhaps you will not be surprised to hear that he was a leper, though you may be rather astonished to learn that once upon a time he actually lived at Manankavaly. You will see he was a real live hero, just as Rafaravavy was a live heroine. His name was Ràdàvidra, or Mr. David. He had been trained as an evangelist, but alas ! after a time he became a leper. Mr. Peake, hearing of this, wisely thought he would make a good overseer for his settlement, so he appointed him to that post. Ràdàvidra also acted as teacher and preacher to the lepers, and assisted the missionary in many other ways.

During the terrible rebellion of which I told you in the last chapter, the rebels not only attacked the Norwegian leper establishment, but

they also attacked the one at Manankavaly. They stole the stores of rice which Mr. Peake had provided for the sufferers, took all the money Ràdàvidra had in hand for the purchase of a variety of things ; and then, turning to him, they declared that unless he, too, would join their party and so become a professed heathen and forsake His Master, Jesus Christ, he should be put to death.

Our hero replied in words meaning something like this : “ You may take my life if you like, but give up my religion I never can, and *I never will.*” I am ashamed to tell you that the heathen rebels cut off the head of the heroic Ràdàvidra, and then burned his poor leprous body.

Thus died another martyr in Madagascar, and this quite recently as you see, and only about fifteen miles from Antananarivo.

I hope you are noticing what I very much want you to see—the difference between the heathen population and those who are true Christians. I want you to feel very sorry for those who have never heard of Jesus, and to think what splendid Christians some of those former rebels might become if only they had missionaries and others to teach them. You will see that the Malagasy are indeed worth helping ; and I trust you may never forget the courage of Rasalama, Rafaravavy, Ràdàvidra, and the hundreds of others who have willingly suffered for Christ’s sake in the Martyrs’ Isle.

CHAPTER X

STILL DARKER DAYS

PROBABLY you are surprised at the title of this chapter : “ Still darker days.” You may think that nothing could be worse than the terrible rebellion, and we thought so, too, at the time. But it is quite true that trying as was the war, and dreadful the heathen rebellion, days quickly followed which were darker still. It is remarkable how much the Malagasy Christians have had to suffer. When I was a girl it used to be said that “ The more cuts the diamond has, the more it shines.” Perhaps that is why the Malagasy Christians get so many “ cuts ” ; God wishes them to be as beautiful diamonds shining brightly for Him.

You will remember that just before the taking of the capital by the French, Mr. Sharman and I left our home and found a happy place of refuge with Quaker missionaries—Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, who were afterwards murdered. When Mr. and Mrs. Standing with their three children wanted a home in Antananarivo they came to us, L.M.S., though they themselves were Quakers. The Church of England missionary who left with his wife and children in the night, when the rebels were near, sought shelter with Norwegian missionaries. Now that may seem a little strange to some of you, but I think it is

just how things should be the wide world over. If we are Christians we should love Quaker Christians just as we do Congregational ones, and even nationality should make no difference. It should be perfectly natural to love a Malagasy Christian, or a French one, or a Norwegian, if we ourselves are true.

For many years this happy union existed in Madagascar, and



TAISAKA CHIEFS (S.E. OF MADAGASCAR).

missionaries of various societies worked together in harmony and love. Especially has this been the case with the F.F.M.A. (Quaker Mission) and the L.M.S., so that the natives often speak of the two societies as "the brother and sister missions."

When the F.F.M.A. commence new work they arrange it so as not to interfere with L.M.S. work, and schools, districts, etc., are kept

quite distinct. If the F.F.M.A. is at work in one part of the country the L.M.S. are not needed there, but can give their energies to other parts. This is a wise and economical method, especially in a country where so much has yet to be done, and the workers are very few.

On the other hand, the members of both societies living in the capital meet together once a week for prayer ; and in all their plans and efforts they try to arrange that which will be the best for Christ's Kingdom as a whole.

This is very good for the work, for the missionaries themselves, and especially for the people amongst whom they work.

It is, therefore, with great reluctance I tell you boys and girls quite a different story. I have tried to leave this chapter out altogether, for it so sad ; but my brief account of the Malagasy Church would be incomplete without it. Besides, I particularly want you to remember that long ago we had similar dark days in our own country, and some of our forefathers bought *our* religious freedom with their blood, as the Malagasy have paid for theirs more recently. Hundreds of brave, true-hearted Englishmen were imprisoned, and not a few suffered death in those days. The same thing happened later on in France. I hope, when you are a little older, you will read about these things, for it is what every young man and woman ought to do. You should also know what it really means to be a Protestant, and *why* you are one. You should understand what great privileges have come into your life through the courage of our ancestors.

We all know, I think, that there are many good Christian Roman Catholics in the world, and we wish to love them as we love other Christians. But there is, unfortunately, a *class* of Roman Catholic priests whom we cannot respect, and I must tell you a little about

them in this chapter, or you will not understand about the "still darker days." These priests, called Jesuits, were responsible for, perhaps, the saddest days Madagascar has yet seen.

Cruel as was the rebellion, we must always remember that the rebels were heathen; and though they were so fearfully unkind to the Christians, we could only pity them. Who *could* blame them?



GROUP OF BETSILEO WOMEN.

No one had ever taught them of Jesus and His love, or if they had it had been so very, very little, and they had not half understood. Christian churches in England and elsewhere were more to blame in a way, because if only sufficient missionaries had been sent out to teach them all, such trouble would never have come to Madagascar.

Long before the rebellion was over the Protestant Christians were attacked by a new enemy, by those who should have been their friends.

Why bear the name of *Jesu-it*, the name of the Prince of Peace, and yet bring discord, trouble, sorrow, persecution with them?

Imagine our Christian Malagasy at this time—robbed, on the one hand, nay, even killed sometimes by the furious rebel band for being Christians; persecuted, terrorized, called rebels and put into prison, simply for being Protestant and not Roman Catholic, on the other hand. The Malagasy had never heard of such divisions; they were used to unity, and they were greatly troubled and perplexed, especially in the country, where they had only had very little education.

Now in a book like this I cannot tell you much about the difference in the belief of a Roman Catholic and a Protestant, any more than I can tell you how the belief of the Quaker differs from that of the Congregationalist. But I do want to show you how it is the Jesuit priest and the Protestant missionary cannot work peacefully together.

One thing which grieves us much is this: the Jesuit priest does not allow ordinary people to read the Bible. The Bible, he says, is for the *priest*, and the priest for the people. Now, as you have already seen, the Malagasy Christians love their Bibles, and you can well understand how sorrowful they were when a priest entering their village would order Bibles and Testaments to be *burned*. The Protestant missionary had taught the Malagasy to read the Bible and to follow its teaching; now they were told to burn it, *not by the heathen rebels, but by the priest!*

Another thing which caused much trouble was this. Wherever the Protestants had good work in progress, the Jesuit priests tried to ruin it. Instead of going to the thousands of heathen and preaching to them, they simply went to the Protestant centres. Everything

that could be done to terrify the people was done, and hundreds suffered more through this persecution than they did by the rebellion, and, as you know, that indeed was dreadful. Some of the timid, weak, undecided Malagasy, thinking to lessen their troubles and their difficulties, followed the priests and called themselves Roman Catholics, and no one could be surprised. But the joy of our hearts was that the majority of those who were regarded as earnest Christians did not give up either their Bibles or their Protestant religion, though many had a heavy price to pay for their constancy.

Again, a priest would sometimes walk into a Protestant church, and taking with him a band of people whom he had frightened into being his followers, would declare the building a Catholic place of worship, though L.M.S. members had built it and worshipped in it for many years. "*Thou shalt not steal*," seemed forgotten, and the Malagasy, who knew their Bibles, said that the priest himself did not honour the Word of God.

You will, I am sure, be surprised to hear that it is part of the religion of a Jesuit priest to *persecute* all *heretics*. Now to persecute is the very opposite of "*to love*." It is to annoy, to worry, or to be cruel towards those who think differently from ourselves. And "heretics" are those who do not believe in the true faith. The Jesuit regards all Protestants as "heretics," and, strange to say, he thinks it right to persecute them. You would have thought, perhaps, that if his religion were worth having he would have been very kind in order to win us to it.

Christ taught us to "love our enemies;" and we must try to love these poor deluded priests, though we hate their teaching. We are so sorry they call themselves after the holy name of Jesus,

for they may not keep one of His greatest commandments—" *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*"

Perhaps you see now two or three reasons which make it quite impossible for Protestant missionary and Jesuit priest to work together happily.

Things grew worse and worse in Madagascar. The Government had not yet learnt to trust the English missionary ; they knew more about priests, and that made them doubt all the other Christian preachers. Sometimes we feared that, as in the days of the terrible Ranavalona I, the missionaries might again have to leave the island for the good of the native Christians. The Malagasy had never, however, been in distress so great. It is far more difficult to withstand a crafty Jesuit priest than a cruel heathen queen. A foe dressed in the garb of religion is much sadder to think of than a poor rebel with all his war-charms.

Happily the Protestants away in France saw what was happening in Madagascar. Though not very numerous, these brave French Protestants opened their purses wide, and sent out French missionaries to help the Malagasy Church in its dire distress. Their forefathers had suffered much, and some of them, too, through the evil practices of the Jesuits ; so they realized the situation, and their hearts were full of sympathy. The English missionaries understood the Malagasy and knew their language ; the French missionaries could speak to their own Government, and they were familiar with the ways of the priest, so together—the French and the English missionaries—were able to work for the benefit of the Protestant Church in Madagascar.

After a time new laws were passed giving liberty to all—whether

Catholic or Protestant—to worship in their own way and according to their faith.

The severity of the storm was over ! Once more the Malagasy Christians had gone through terrible trial ; but God had been with them, and like the “ cut diamond ” they shone more brightly than before.

CHAPTER XI

SCHOOL LIFE IN MADAGASCAR

SINCE the far-away days of David Jones, schools have been making progress in Madagascar. Happily for the Malagasy, the L.M.S. and its missionaries have always felt the true importance of school life and the great advantage of training the young, so that now we have in Madagascar some of the best schools in any part of the Society's field. Only the other day a well-known missionary from China said to me : " Ah ! there you are ahead of us ; our education work is not so well arranged as yours."

It is well for the missionary, too, that the schools are appreciated by the natives. Many of them are willing to make great sacrifices in order that their boys and girls may receive a good education. School life in Madagascar is truly happy, for where properly taught the scholars are most intent on learning ; they are very obedient and easily interested ; their enthusiasm is unbounded, and the annual examination is the great event of the year.

Some people say : " Why educate the Malagasy? Why spend the money ? " If such friends could visit the great African island and see the difference between an educated and an uneducated Malagasy, such a question would never be asked again.

Sometimes when visiting country churches I have seen in the audience a bright, intelligent-looking young man or woman who seemed to be taking in every word that was said. At the close of the service I have asked the question : " Where did you go to school ? " and nearly always the reply has been : " At such and such a mission school "—usually in the capital. How very difficult it is to teach



GROUP OF COUNTRY CHILDREN.

grown-up people anything who have never been to school, I will try to show you, by telling you a little story.

At my home in Madagascar we have a " water-man," that is a man who carries all the water we require from a well, which is at the foot of a hill some distance from the house. When a boy he lived in the country, and unfortunately never went to school. So when he came to live with us, I naturally decided to help him all I could. One

day at morning prayers, I tried to teach him in Malagasy the text : "*I am the good Shepherd.*" He would say it wrongly ; sometimes, "I, madam, am the good Shepherd" ; again, "I am the good Shepherd, madam." I tried to show how, by being too polite and putting in "madam," he altered the meaning, and counting the words on my fingers I said : "Repeat after me word by word '*I*' '*am*' '*the*' '*good*' '*Shepherd.*'" Five words ! (only four in Malagasy), and I spent no less than twenty minutes in trying to teach Rabe that little sentence, and I thought with some success. Next morning at prayers I turned to Rabe and said, "Now, Rabe, we should like you to tell us the text I taught you yesterday." Imagine, if you can, my disappointment when smiling sweetly at me he replied : "I think I shall need a little more teaching first, madame !"

Rabe has nine children, and to his credit I must say that his great ambition is that they should all go to school, and not suffer as he has done. Not long ago his second son came out top of the Boys' High School for Scripture. What a difference ! He had passed a stiff examination with great success ; the father could not learn to say, "*I am the good Shepherd.*"

What is the good of education to the Malagasy ? Why, just all the good in the world ! It is not very much use sending out missionaries simply to preach the Gospel ; but the people, whilst young, must be taught to read and write ; that is to say, we must have schools for the children. The missionary has so much to do that perhaps he is only able to visit his numerous churches once in six months, or even once a year. Without the Bible and the knowledge of how to read it, how must the poor, ignorant people fare between the visits of the missionary ?

In Madagascar, whilst teaching all the ordinary school subjects, we are most particular about the religious teaching we give our pupils. The parents are glad of this, and over and over again I have heard them say : " We want our boy to come to your school, because you will teach him ' the praying.' "

We now have a number of Government schools in the island, but



PUPILS OF MRS. GRIFFITH (AMBOHIMANGA) LEARNING THE MAYPOLE DANCE.

here no Scripture lesson is ever given and the scholars are never taught to pray ; in fact, I blush to say that in many cases the poor Malagasy are taught *not* to believe in Jesus, but just to trust to their old idols or anything else. I have even known French teachers tell their pupils there is no God.

You will see from this that our mission schools are not *less* needed because there are Government schools ; but, on the contrary, they

are required more than ever if the Malagasy are to become Christians.

Boys and girls attending our High Schools in the capital are obliged to pay fees, and to buy their own books. At the Government schools books are provided and no fees are charged. Yet so much do the fathers and mothers like their children to come to a mission school, that in one year lately £80 was received in fees and £40 for books in the Boys' High School. We always know that people think much of anything for which they are willing to pay.

Some of our boys never taste breakfast, and often I see quite a number sitting during dinner hour in the playground because there is no dinner for them. In fact, many get but one meal a day (in the evening usually), and I sometimes wonder how they can be so good in school when they are so very, very hungry. But if they had two meals a day, mother would have nothing left with which her boy could buy his books, and the boy's education is put first.

Once we had a naughty Malagasy boy living with us. On one occasion he had been disobedient, and troublesome in other ways. How do you think we punished him? We kept him at home from school for a week, and that was probably the greatest punishment we could give him! Some English boys, I know, would think it rare fun not to go to school; but Rajasmina was exceedingly troubled, and when his companions came home, he ran to meet them to ask what lessons had been learnt in his class, that he might try to keep up with his schoolmates.

We have a large number of small village schools in Madagascar. These are managed by native teachers under the superintendence of a missionary. One missionary will have from twenty to forty such

schools under his care, some being half a day's journey or more from where he lives. These schools are very simple and primitive. They are usually without desks, and frequently without forms, the children sitting on the mud floor to write, etc. There are no proper windows in the building, but little shutters are opened to let in some light.



TEACHER AND HER PUPILS.

Pictures are unknown, and you might think there was nothing in the least attractive in such a school. But even here good work is done, and the diligent boys and girls have bright dreams of one day being clever enough to learn at one of the High Schools in Antananarivo.

It would be very pleasant to write a chapter on country schools,

especially on the few which are under the direct superintendence of the missionary and his wife, and which are much in advance of the ordinary country school. I should like to tell you of our Sunday Schools, some of which are well conducted and prosperous ; but I have only space to give you a little information about three of our largest schools, which are found in the capital, and are known as *High Schools*. Here missionaries superintend and teach, and you will not be surprised to hear that these schools are very popular indeed. We have some good schools, too, in Fianarantsoa ; but as I have not yet had the pleasure of visiting them, you must ask one of the missionaries there to tell you something about them.

Let us, then, in imagination, pay a visit to these High Schools. It is eight o'clock in the morning. The school bell has finished ringing ; as the clock strikes, the door is closed, and any young lady appearing after that time is late.

You ask, as we approach the nice-looking building, " Which of the High Schools is this ? " and I reply, " The Girls' Central." For many years Miss Craven was the proud principal of this school, and it would have been a great pleasure for her to show us round. If we are at once conducted to the large hall, we shall see the whole school assembled for morning prayers. There are probably three hundred girls present. They are mostly dressed in white, their "*akanjo*," or simple frock, being made of calico. All wear a "*lamba*," frequently of calico, too, but sometimes of coloured print. Their dark hair is parted down the middle, commonly plaited in two long plaits, and neatly arranged in the nape of the neck. Here and there a girl wears a black or dark navy blue "*akanjo* " ; this is a sign of mourning.

The bell is touched, silence follows, and a hymn is given out, which the girls sing very sweetly. This is followed by the reading of the Scriptures and prayer, after which the girls disperse to their various classes.

Perhaps you wonder what these girls learn at school. All the



MAKING LACE.

ordinary subjects such as reading, writing and arithmetic, with Scripture, drawing, sol-fa, needlework. The latter they do beautifully, and I have sometimes had the honour of examining their work at the annual examination, and so of comparing it with what I have seen done by English girls. You will doubtless be pleased to hear that Malagasy girls are as skilful with their needle as any English school-

girl. Besides, they can crochet, embroider and make beautiful lace.¹

You will be interested in knowing that the last Queen of Mada-



THE EX-QUEEN RANAVALONA III.

(Now living in Algiers.)

gascar, Ranavalona III, was a pupil, when a girl, at the Girls' Central School, though not in the present building. This comparatively new

¹ Malagasy girls and women earn quite a nice livelihood by making pillow lace. It was Mrs. Wills (L.M.S.), wife of the late Rev. J. Wills, who introduced lace-making into Madagascar.

school was opened by Queen Ranavalona III nearly fifteen years ago. She came down to the ceremony from the palace, carried in her gorgeous palanquin, and attended by the Prime Minister and members of her court. The girls, dressed in white, many wearing wreaths of flowers in their hair, and all carrying flowers in their hands, went out in procession to meet their queen, singing a song of welcome. It was a pretty sight. A special platform had been erected for Queen Ranavalona, perched up high above every one else (according to Malagasy custom), and there she sat in a grand chair on a dais, the Prime Minister by her side, only a little lower. The ceremony nearly over, the queen was seen speaking to the Prime Minister, who immediately rose and made a short speech, thanking the L.M.S. and the missionaries, on behalf of the queen and himself, for all they had so lovingly done for the Malagasy. Still the queen seemed a trifle fidgety, when by and by to the delight of all, she rose to her feet, and after thanking the L.M.S. and missionaries again for their work amongst her people, referred to the time when she herself was a pupil in the High School, and concluded by saying she hoped every girl in that school might become a Christian.

It is considered quite an honour to have been educated in this school, and many of our best Malagasy women to-day were once pupils at the Central High School.

We must not linger longer, but take a walk of about a quarter of an hour, when we shall find ourselves at Ambatonakanga, where we have two High Schools; one for girls, and the other for boys. We will first visit the former.

This school is growing in importance year by year, and has now almost as many pupils as the Central School. Miss Sibree, the princi-

pal, is justly very proud of her teachers and her girls ; and if you could really pay a visit to the school, you would quite understand the reason. The school is exceedingly orderly, and the scholars look bright and happy. Evidently they are fond of their teachers, from the principal downwards. We are too late for the opening, but we will ask Miss Sibree to allow us to visit the various classrooms. The



BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL, ANTANANARIVO.

elder pupils, you will find, perhaps, busy over their lace-pillows or doing some dainty needlework, or they may be having an interesting Scripture lesson. Passing into another room, we find a class singing, and this the girls do correctly and in good time. All learn sol-fa, and so sing intelligently. Others are learning arithmetic, writing, or per-

haps geography ; whilst the wee little ones may just be learning how to read. How pretty they look, and how busy !

One feels what a delightful place this school is, and how particularly pleasant for those children who come from poor homes where there is no comfort, and little, if anything, to cheer. If you stay for a chat with Miss Sibree she will tell you how eager she is for all her pupils to be true disciples of Jesus Christ, and how very glad she is because her teachers share this desire with her. These high schools in Madagascar *are* happy places, I assure you.

“ But what about the boys ? ” you say, “ where is their High School ? ” Here it is, within a stone’s throw of Miss Sibree’s school. And the boys think as much of their school as the girls do of either of theirs. It is always a good sign when boys and girls are proud of the school they attend.

You must look at the building itself first, for it is indeed a very handsome one. The Ambatonakanga Memorial Church (of which you have read) stands beside it, and you will be interested in knowing that the Rev. James Sibree, who was the architect of the church, was also the architect of the school. I once read in a French paper an account of Antananarivo, and in one paragraph it said that “ The Ambatonakanga buildings (church and high school) formed the most picturesque pile in the whole city.”

The building was opened in April, 1901, by the French Governor-General of Madagascar. That was a red-letter day for our mission.

Five years previous to this the Rev. James Sharman had opened a school for senior boys in a small building in another part of the capital. He commenced with forty pupils, but the numbers grew so rapidly that the missionaries in Antananarivo were obliged to ask

the Directors of the Society to allow a suitable school to be erected, and when it was opened there were five hundred boys on the books.

This important school has four departments—junior, senior, normal and technical, with three missionaries (Rev. James Sharman,



CENTRAL HALL, BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL, ANTANANARIVO.

Monsieur Matthey and Monsieur Gaye), and a large staff of native teachers. The number of pupils varies from 600 to 650.

School opens, as with the girls, at eight o'clock. It is considered quite a disgrace to be late, though some of the boys must leave their homes before six o'clock. The first half hour of every morning

is devoted to the singing of a hymn, Bible study and prayers. All the seniors meet in the large hall, whilst the juniors occupy another part of the building.

It is difficult to tell which department is the more interesting, but I will take you for a few minutes in imagination to each, and then you shall decide.



PRODUCTS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL.

1. An L. M. S. teacher.
2. Holds an important Government position.
3. Pastor of an L. M. S. church in the suburbs of Antananarivo.

We will commence with the little ones. I shall really be surprised if you do not say, "Well! they are the jolliest little lads I ever saw!" You notice that the majority wear knickerbockers with a sort of blouse or short jacket, and over all a tiny "lamba." They do not wear boots, hence they pass from room to room quite noiselessly.

This junior department consists of four classes, the lads ranging

in age from seven to eleven. Their rooms are bright, neatly and orderly arranged, and the boys sit so beautifully and look so attentive, that one feels they are quite deserving of their kind teachers and pleasant classrooms.

"Why! these little boys are learning French! How prettily they speak," you say. That is quite true, and in this and perhaps one or two other points they are in advance of ordinary English boys.

"But why do you teach French?" I hear you say.

Because Madagascar is a French colony, and no boy can get a good post unless he can speak French fluently; and you know we should not like our L.M.S. pupils to take all the back seats, and posts of honour and influence to go to others, many of whom are not Christians. It is one way of spreading the Gospel to teach our boys French.



RASAMOELY, TEACHER OF CLASS VIII.

Perhaps you can scarcely believe that. But it is in this way. When Malagasy boys become men they often have to go to far-away parts of the island as teachers, doctors, traders, etc. If they are Christians

they take the Gospel with them, so that is why I say it is spreading the Gospel to teach French. These boys could never become either teachers, governors, or anything else of importance without a knowledge of French.

We must pass quickly through this lower school, where Scripture,



CLASS VIII, WITH THEIR TEACHER.

reading, dictation, arithmetic, drawing, object lessons, sol-fa, French, form the chief subjects of instruction.

Entering the next section, we find four classes of boys ranging from eleven to fourteen years of age. Many of these come from the country, and little parties of five or six rent a room and live together, cooking their own rice, and managing as well as they can. But it is not easy for them, and great are their difficulties and their temptations.

These are studying the same subjects as the juniors, with the addition of history, geography and simple science. For the blouses of the little ones are substituted short jackets, usually white; and very neat and tidy most of the scholars look, though it is evident that some are decidedly poor.



ONE OF THE WORKSHOPS AT THE BOYS' HIGH SCHOOL.

You must pause a minute longer at Class VIII. Twice a year we have a collection at our high school to help the native missionary society, which sends out Malagasy men and their wives as missionaries to the heathen parts of Madagascar. This class shines all the year round, but especially when the missionary collection is made. I

think the teacher (Rasamoely) has much to do with it, for he sets a good example, and so encourages his pupils.

Now we will visit the normal department, with its classes of elder boys and young men. These are the future teachers of the mission, and usually the "cream" of the school. At the end of their long course they have a most difficult Government examination to pass in order to gain a teacher's certificate. Amongst the subjects are: Malagasy composition, French dictation and composition, French grammar and reading, carpentry, mechanical drawing, agriculture, and the teaching of a class before the inspector. You would never look down on a Malagasy student if you saw how hard he works and how clever he often becomes.

The last department is particularly interesting. Here many of our elder scholars learn carpentry and mechanics. This is very good for them, and enables them to get appointments on leaving school. Not long ago one of our students went to reside as missionary in a town a week's journey from Antananarivo. The people needed a church in which to worship, and they required some one to be their leader in the work. The missionary was equal to the emergency. He wrote to the Rev. J. Sibree asking for a plan, and then he set to work with his people to put up the building. It was hard work cutting down trees, carrying wood from the forest, making bricks, building, carpentering, etc.; but it had to be done, and Ravalitera worked at the putting up of the church on weekdays and preached on Sundays, living the Gospel and teaching it by his consistent life every day.

Connected with the Boys' High School are two Christian Endeavour Societies, a junior and a senior. Once a quarter the two have a united meeting, and I have seen over four hundred present.

But the great ambition of some of our senior students is to become evangelists. Should the young man be considered suitable in every way, but especially in character, he passes from the normal department of the high school to the Theological College, where Mr. Sibree, the principal, and his native staff give a sound training to their students.

CHAPTER XII

L.M.S. "HOMES" FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

AS you read in the last chapter, country boys and girls often leave their homes to study in the high schools of the capital. You will have seen the reason for this. Though many of the native teachers are diligent and ambitious for their pupils, they cannot give them more than a very elementary education. Sometimes the village schoolmaster will have three or four different classes under his care, and you will understand how difficult it is for him to give much special teaching to the one or two clever boys or girls at the top of the school. Very frequently, therefore, if the parents can afford it, their children are sent up to the capital, and if they succeed in passing the entrance examination at the high school they are at once admitted, providing there are sufficient vacancies.

Native missionaries, working in heathen parts of the island, are always eager to send any promising pupils to the Boys' High School, in order that they may receive a good training and education, and afterwards return as teachers to their own heathen tribes.

How to find suitable homes for these young people is a great problem. Miss Craven takes twenty girls into her home, and Mr. Sharman and myself receive thirty boys. But there are scores of country

children living in Antananarivo who are very badly off indeed, and we are constantly wondering what can be done to make life easier and more helpful for them. The temptations of city life are exceedingly great, and the inconveniences from which many suffer would be enough to discourage all but the stout-hearted and determined.



A NEEDLEWORK LESSON. GROUP OF "HOME GIRLS" WITH MISS CRAVEN.

As the girls had the preference in the eleventh chapter, we will commence with the boys in this. It is very pleasant for me to write of the Boys' Home, because it is "*my* home," too.

Some English friends seem to think we must have rather a bad time with thirty Malagasy boys in the house, but they are quite mistaken. On the contrary, we should not like to be without them, for

they are so interesting and well-behaved, and, as a rule, more than repay us for any care or trouble they may give us. The elder "boys" are most helpful, and look after the little ones beautifully, whilst the younger ones are proud of their "*zoky*" (or "elder brothers," as they call them), and try to carry out their wishes. Our "Home" is a thoroughly happy one, and we sometimes think it would be difficult to find one quite as pleasant. That speaks well for the boys, does it not?

Let us have a peep at them. You notice they vary in age, some being over twenty (but they are still our "boys"), and others only twelve or thirteen. They are dressed very neatly, and look bright and intelligent. I am sure you will think they are extremely polite: perhaps you will not like me for saying it, but I find them far more polite than the majority of English boys! If you pop in at "study time" you will find the boys hard at work; and should you speak French, the older ones will be delighted to chat with you, and to answer any questions or give any information you may require.

Their names and their Malagasy language will sound strange to you. How should you like your name to be Razafindrasolo, or Razafimpananina, or Razafindrakotovao or Rahamefisona? Perhaps you would prefer Rasamoely (Mr. Samuel) or Rajosefa (Mr. Joseph) as being more familiar.

The boys are fond of a little fun, and occasionally get into mischief but then they would not be real boys otherwsie.

One day I actually caught quite a big boy coming into one of the rooms by the window! It happened to be rather nearer for him than going round to the door. Of course I was slightly shocked, and

thought it might be well to warn all the boys, and to say how much I disapproved. That window I could see *was* very tempting. So poor Ramanandiamanana (that was the culprit's name) was ordered to ring the bell, and in a few minutes the thirty "boys" were assembled in their dining-room, doubtless wondering what awaited them.



GROUP OF "HOME BOYS" WITH REV. JAMES AND MRS. SHARMAN.

Looking as serious as ever I could, I explained that Ramanandiamanana had been getting into the sitting-room through the window, though doors had been made for that purpose. I thought it would be well for Ramanandiamanana to be fined twopence, and I was doing

it publicly as a warning to all. What do you think happened? First one boy put up his hand and then another, until nearly every one owned to having been guilty of the same thing, and would therefore pay twopence like Ramanandiamanana. I thought that was very honourable of the boys. I could see in it also love for their comrade, who is a great favourite, and I suppose the other boys might think it easier for him if they suffered with him and confessed to being as



BOYS' HOME, ANTANANARIVO.

naughty! Turning to the teacher in charge I said: "You are responsible, Rabevazaha, for collecting the fines; when all is in hand, bring the money, please, to me." Then he replied: "I cannot deceive you, madam. I am as bad as the boys, and it would be mean of me if I did not own up, too; once I was in a hurry and came in through that window, but I'll pay up." Immediately Ramanandia-

manana asked for permission to speak. Said he : " I feel truly ashamed, madam, at having grieved you, but as long as I live, I will never enter the house again by that window." Turning to the boys I said, " Who will promise likewise ? " Every hand shot up like a dart ; the " boys " were all forgiven, and loved even more than ever, and I am glad to say their promises have been kept.

But what do you think of the boys' rooms ? You see we have a



SENIOR "HOME BOYS."

fine, large dining-room with three good-sized tables. Here the boys have their meals, and all but the seniors study here in the evenings. You notice the pictures ; they, of course, are mostly from England. And the clock ? Yes, that was given to the Home by one of the Directors of the L.M.S., so we are naturally very proud of it. I should like you to look at the photographs hanging in the place of honour. There we have the " Grandfather " and " Grannie " of the family—the Rev. J. and Mrs. Pearse, who kindly took charge of the Home when the " father and mother " were last in England on furlough. They

are never forgotten for all their loving kindness and goodness to the boys then in the Home.

And there is a great treasure—the harmonium. The boys are so fond of playing it that we find it necessary to make a time-table, showing at what hours it may be used, otherwise we should hear its melodious or discordant sounds from early morning to bedtime, when the boys were not at school.

"But what is this snug little room?" you say. That is a sitting-room for the elder "boys." Eight seniors, as a great privilege, occupy this room when studying, and here they are very cosy when the younger ones have gone to bed. If one of these seniors should leave, his successor is voted upon, so great is the honour of being one of the distinguished eight.

Will you now come upstairs? We have three dormitories; one holding eighteen beds, and two each accommodating six. You will be pleased to hear that some of the boys made their own bedsteads. At the foot of each bed is a box or large basket with a lid, in which the boys keep their surplus clothes and their books.

We cannot have "mothers and daughters" at our boarding school, so we have "*zoky*" and "*zandry*"—"big brothers" and "little brothers"—and we try to arrange that the "*zandry*" sleep in the same dormitory as their "*zoky*."

Perhaps you ask: "But who keeps all these rooms so beautifully clean and tidy?"

The floors are scrubbed regularly by a Malagasy woman, but the boys themselves are responsible for sweeping the rooms each morning, and for keeping them neat. After breakfast every boy makes his own bed, then certain boys, according to order, and for a week at a

time, sweep the floors (not forgetting the dust under beds and tables) and tidy up the rooms. Perhaps you wonder if that part of their



PLAYING AT RIDING IN A PALANQUIN.

work is well done. I think I must tell you a "Home" secret. Supposing anybody does his share badly, he is simply put on duty for

another week, and so must sweep a floor every morning for a fortnight instead of for a week ; and Malagasy boys know better than that, I assure you !

" But what about meals ? " Malagasy never take porridge, or bread and butter, ham and eggs, and such like things for breakfast ; neither do our boys have much meat for dinner, and puddings and pies are unknown luxuries. Cake they taste just occasionally, perhaps on Mr. Sharman's birthday or mine, and I dare say they wish we had a birthday party once a month instead of only once a year.

On school-days our boys have breakfast at half-past six ; dinner at half-past twelve, and supper as soon as the sun sets—you know what time that is, don't you ? For the first meal they have a plate piled up with boiled rice, to which milk is added ; and for the other meals boiled rice again, with a small piece of meat. The midday meal is made more palatable by the addition of cooked onions, the leaves of kidney beans or vegetable marrow, or Malagasy herbs. These are prepared with the meat, and are much appreciated.

All our boys go to school or college ; a few of the elder ones are teachers. The High School is nearly half an hour's walk from the Home, so the boys get four pleasant walks each day.

It is usually five o'clock when they return in the evening. Each one has a small patch of garden, which he must cultivate regularly for half an hour per day (excepting Sundays), and this is generally done between five o'clock and half-past.

Then games follow, and music *always*. It is quite a pleasure to hear the " full choir," for the boys sing sweetly and correctly, and in four parts. The little boys are particularly fond of playing marbles

and other games, one of which reminds me of "Orange and Lemon."

The evenings are quietly spent in the preparation of home-lessons. We have prayers at eight o'clock, after which the younger ones go to bed, one of the seniors superintending. The elder ones study until



"ORANGES AND LEMONS."

ten o'clock, and it is often with sighs they close their books. This is especially the case when examinations are near.

School is closed on Saturdays, and so on that day the boys wash their own clothes. As there is no water on our premises, they go down to the river, which is half an hour's walk or more from the house. There in a secluded spot they do their washing, and whilst the clothes are drying take their weekly bath. Many are good swimmers, and

they teach the others. This is much enjoyed, and it is often two o'clock before they return for dinner with keen appetites, and quite ready for their plates of rice. As I am rather nervous about the river, groups of four or five younger boys are always put in charge of one of the teachers.

One Saturday afternoon there was great excitement in the Home. Pride mingled with fear, and joy with anxiety. The boys scarcely liked telling me the cause of all this, for fear, as they said, "of putting you about." They knew it was not right to hide anything from their "Mother," and for very pride they wished to explain what had happened. It seems one of the boys had that morning got out of his depth, and was just about to sink when one of the teachers, seeing his plight, dashed into the river, and brought him out unconscious. The boys were much excited, and when they spoke of the teacher's bravery their faces simply beamed with delight.

Sunday is a full day at the Home. A little before nine o'clock all assemble in the garden, and together we walk to the Memorial Church of Ambohipotsy (I hope you remember the story of Rasalama, the first Malagasy martyr, in connexion with this church). One or two may be missing; if so, they are away preaching in the country.

After the morning service Sunday School is held, and by twelve o'clock we are again at home. You might like to join the boys for dinner on Sundays, for though you would only have boiled rice and a small piece of beef for your first course, you might have a large piece of delicious pineapple for the second. This fruit is so cheap in Madagascar that we can afford on Sundays to give one between every two boys.

At half-past one, many attend the "Croix Blanche" meeting, or Purity Society, which they themselves have founded and carried on with marked success. At these meetings there is always a chairman, a speaker who must prepare his address, and sometimes a collection ! Some of the money thus collected goes to the native Missionary Society,



THREE MEMBERS OF THE "CROIX BLANCHE" OR PURITY SOCIETY.

and a little is reserved to help any boy who may be ill, or otherwise in need.

The afternoon service commences at three o'clock, after which the Sunday School teachers' preparation class is held, and in which the seniors have a part.

Sunday evening we spend pleasantly together at home, the "treat" of the evening being the music and singing, in which we all have a share.

All those who have parents or suitable friends are allowed to spend their holidays with them. We think much of the influence these boys have in the various villages they visit at such times. Once lately I met a city pastor. He told me that he had recently been away to a small town on the border of the forest for a short rest and change. Said he: "In the old days the singing at the little chapel was so terrible, I could scarcely endure it. But," he continued, "this time it was so sweet and agreeable, I thoroughly enjoyed it." Asking what had brought about such a change, the people replied: "Some of our boys are in the L.M.S. Home at Antananarivo, and when they are home for a holiday they teach us."

On another occasion two boys spent their vacation in a heathen village. They much wanted to help the people, and I think they showed great tact. Knowing the Malagasy love for music, they used to visit at one of the houses, and then taking out their hymnbooks sing together one after another of their sweetest songs. They had good voices, one singing treble, the other alto. By and by the inmates of the house stopped their work and sat to listen. Neighbours peeped in, and before long the floor was simply packed with people sitting there listening to the beautiful singing. This was done every afternoon for a time, the house getting uncomfortably crowded. Having won the hearts of the people, the boys asked permission one day to read a few verses from God's Word and to pray before separating, and so in this way those two earnest boys tried to tell of the Saviour they had learnt to love.

I should like you English boys to have some *plan* for helping the heathen.

But I really must apologise for keeping you so very long at the Boys' Home. You know it is "my home," too, and so you will excuse me, especially as it is some time since I was there in reality.



TEACHER AND GROUP OF GIRLS IN MISS CRAVEN'S "HOME." "PREPARING HOME-LESSONS."

Miss Craven's Home for Girls is also in Antananarivo, and deserves a lengthened visit. Her girls are very bonny, and look bright and happy; and indeed they ought to do, for Miss Craven thinks quite as much of "her girls" as some people do of "their boys."

Many of the girls are the daughters of evangelists and teachers who in far-away places are working for the L.M.S. as assistants of the missionaries. By living with Miss Craven they not only have the advantage of Christian home influence, but they are able to get a good education by attending one of the high schools.

Their meals are very similar to those of the boys. Their hours at school are shorter. Girls have no afternoon school in Madagascar, though they work from eight o'clock until one (excepting the very little ones), and that is fairly long. Girls are much needed at home for nursing baby, earning a little money by lace-making, etc. Miss Craven's girls do their home-lessons in the afternoon, and so can go to bed much earlier than the boys. Their "Home" duties are varied, such as sweeping their rooms, sweeping and dusting Miss Craven's dining-room, washing their plates, etc. They are very clever at various kinds of needlework, which is sold for the benefit of the Home. The elder girls make their own dresses, and like the boys, wash and iron many of their own clothes. Singing they enjoy immensely.

Miss Craven very wisely encourages her girls to spend as much time as possible in the open air, and it is a pretty sight to see the elder ones in the garden busy with their crochet or other work, whilst the little ones are "drawing houses" on the tiles under their verandah, nursing their dolls, or playing at some livelier game.

Four of Miss Craven's girls are pupil teachers at the High School, one, Rasoanoro, being the cousin of the ex-Queen Ranavalona III. She is an efficient teacher and most industrious at home; Miss Craven

is longing for the time when Rasoanoro will become a true Christian.

Sundays are spent similarly to those in the Boys' Home, the girls having a happy time with Miss Craven in the evening.

CHAPTER XIII

TRUE STORIES AGAIN

IN this chapter I am going to tell you some true stories of Malagasy boys who have lived in the L.M.S. Home.

As you have already heard, there are many tribes in Madagascar, and some of these are yet perfectly heathen. We are always glad if we can take into our Home a boy or young man from a heathen tribe, because we think if he can be well trained and educated, and especially if he become a true Christian, he can return to his own people and teach them what he has learnt. We think that is a splendid way of spreading the Gospel. Already we have had representatives of *eight* different tribes in the Home, and usually their stories are most interesting. I will tell you of three of these.



HOVA BABY.

RAZAFINDRAKOTO is a Bèzànòzànò. His real home was fifty or sixty miles from Antananarivo. When a little baby, he was born on a Sunday. You would naturally think that must have been a specially happy day for his parents and friends. On the contrary, all were miserable ! Had the baby's arrival been on a Saturday or Monday, there would doubtless have been great rejoicing in the home. But many Bezanozano think it unlucky for a baby to be born on Sunday,



A TRADER IN EARTHEN COOKING-POTS.

and that was the cause of all the sorrow. As the friends and relatives talked to one another, they said : " What a dreadful thing this is ! The baby will have nothing but bad luck to the end of its life ! How sad for the father and mother ; they *are* unlucky ! "

In a few days the baby's mother died, and then the people were more sure than ever that the baby had brought ill luck. They spoke

to the father, and said all he could do was to *kill* the baby. "What a cruel thing!" we say. Yes; and yet many, many babies have been killed in Madagascar, simply because they have been unfortunate enough to arrive on some unlucky day.

On the Sunday after this baby's birth a large cooking-pot was taken and filled with water. This was boiled, and then the father, calling for the tiny child, said he must be put to death in the boiling water.

Happily for that baby-boy he had a sister. I think she was about twelve years of age. She was such a kind, loving, big sister. Running up to her father she cried in words something like this: "Please father, do not kill the baby; I cannot bear it. Please give me the baby, and I will take him right away, and you shall never be bothered again with him. Only please do not kill my baby brother." At last the father relented, and replied that the



A HEATHEN WOMAN.

sister's request should be granted if she would really go right away and take the baby with her. She gladly agreed, and immediately set off to find a new home for herself and her little brother.

Imagine this brave girl of twelve years of age with a baby only a week old !

The child grew up to be a fine boy. When nine or ten years of age, the L.M.S. sent an evangelist to live in the very place where Razafindrakoto dwelt with his sister. The evangelist soon opened a school for the heathen boys and girls, and one of his early pupils was Razafindrakoto. In this we see what a sensible sister the boy had. After four years he grew quite clever for a heathen boy, and more than that, he was learning to love Jesus. The good teacher was very pleased, and decided to bring him to the Boys' Home in order that he might attend the High School, see more of Christian life, and after some years' thorough training return to his own village to help the evangelist.

Perhaps you may hear boys and girls sometimes saying that Madagascar is a Christian country. If you tell them nicely this story of Razafindrakoto and remind them that his home was not more than sixty miles from the capital, your friends will soon see that they are mistaken, and that we are badly needing more missionaries in Madagascar.

RAJOSEFA OR MR. JOSEPH.—Though the slave *trade* ended in Madagascar in 1817, rich people still continued to keep slaves in their own homes. Some time after the coming of the French, the first Governor-General, called Monsieur Laroche (a Protestant), with the permission of his Government, freed all the slaves, and now in Madagascar, I am glad to tell you, there are no longer slaves of any kind.

Rajosefa was born about twenty-two years ago. His parents

were slaves, so of course he was a little slave, too. He lived a long, long way from Antananarivo, in the south-west of Madagascar, and belonged to a tribe called the *Tandroy*, an absolutely heathen tribe. When he was perhaps seven years of age, what do you think happened? His *father and mother* agreed to his being sold to a new master, and from that day Rajosefa has never seen one of his own relations. He would not even know his mother if he met her, and, therefore, he is just like an orphan.



A GROUP OF "HOME BOYS."

The third from the left is Razafindrakoto.
The fourth from the left is Rajosefa.

The Malagasy who bought Rajosefa was a rich man, and he was exceedingly kind. His home was in Fianarantsoa. He had a little boy of his own, and Rajosefa used to go to the mission school with him. It was the proper thing for the son of a rich man to have a servant always in attendance. Rajosefa very much liked going to school, and especially did he enjoy the Sunday School. When the two grew to be big boys they joined the Bible Class of Mrs. Johnson

(wife of one of our L.M.S. missionaries), and it was then, I think, that Rajosefa decided to be a Christian.

Later on Rajosefa's master sent to ask if the two boys might be admitted into the Home ; if so, he would pay all expenses. He wished his own son to attend the High School, and he would like the servant to accompany him, as they had been brought up together ever since they were little lads. So Rajosefa fortunately became an inmate of the Home and a pupil at the High School. He was, doubtless, the first Tandroy to be educated in the capital. Neither brilliant nor handsome, he was persevering and diligent, and was much respected at the High School on account of his sterling Christian character. In the Home he was a great help in many ways, and an example worthy of imitation to the younger ones.

I am pleased to say that Rajosefa is now a teacher amongst the Bezanozano, the tribe of Razafindrakoto. At present there is no native missionary at work amongst the Tandroy, so we were very glad when Mr. Milledge kindly sent him to the far-away part of his district where the Bezanozano live.

RAKOTOJOHN.—To the north-west of Madagascar lives a tribe called the Sākālāvā. They are a warlike people, and in many ways superior in type and character to the other tribes, excepting, perhaps, the Hova.

But, unfortunately, we have not yet been able to do much for this important tribe ; missionaries are so few, and the money never enough to do a hundredth part of what we should like to do.

The native missionary society has sent a few evangelists to the

Sakalava country, and the F.F.M.A. do as much as they can ; but all put together, it is very little indeed, and consequently the majority of these people are still heathen, not having heard even once of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We were, therefore, very glad about twelve years ago to admit into the Boys' Home a young Sakalava who was sent by the native missionary to be educated in Antananarivo.

Rakotojohn lived with us seven years and a half, and I think it says something for his tribe when I tell you that I never knew him tell a lie. Usually the Malagasy find it hard to be truthful, so that we thought much of this Sakalava who was so frank and straightforward.

During the long time Rakotojohn was with us, he was not *once* able to visit his own home. It was too far way for him to walk there and back in a holiday, and as he said, "It would not do to miss school on any account." But it required some courage for a boy to stay from home for over seven years. We missionaries who live so far away from our own country and friends, know what it means, and often we admired Rakotojohn and thought how brave he was. Sometimes we talked together of this separation, and he would invariably finish up by saying : "Yes, it is very hard, and I get terribly homesick ; but I want to be clever and capable, and then to return and teach my own people of the love of Jesus Christ. I can only do it by being persevering." And in this spirit he endured those long years.

After passing through the High School, Rakotojohn entered the Theological College. He was a very earnest Christian, a diligent student, and a good preacher. His college career over, he got the

desire of his heart, and was appointed as a native missionary to the Sakalava. He married an excellent wife, an old pupil of the Girls' Central School. Together they visited the home of Rakotojohn, and after that they still travelled on for another week, when they came to the town where they were to live and to work. Here they have laboured under great difficulties for five years.

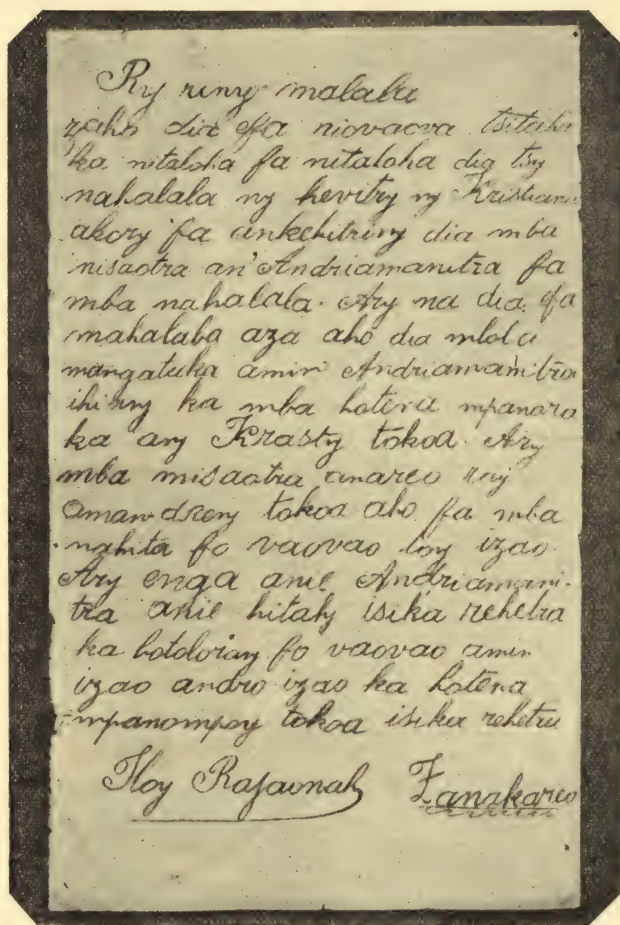
You will thus see that the boys from heathen districts are well worth helping.

Not long ago Rakotojohn wrote us, saying that *fifty-seven heathen had decided to give up their charms*, and wished to worship the true God. How happy he and his devoted wife Razanabelo must have been, and how rejoiced we were in having such good news!

Whilst the young Sakalava was at the Home, he had a great surprise one day. Who should come to see him but his father and a younger brother, called Rajonah. Rakotojohn was almost too happy to do his lessons. At length the father had to return home, but to the joy of the elder brother, Rajonah was allowed to remain behind. The younger boy was probably twelve years old, whilst Rakotojohn was eighteen. It was a very pretty sight to see the two together, and we knew how earnestly the elder one was praying that Rajonah might become a Christian. We were thankful to see what a beautiful influence Rakotojohn had over his brother, and our hearts were glad for both.

One day after a chat with Rakotojohn I said: "How is Rajonah getting on? Do you think he has any light yet?" "Yes, madam," said he, "my brother has a little light now, and what is more, he tries to live up to it." Wasn't that a fine thing to be able to say? The young heathen lad had got some light, and he was living up to it.

Not long afterwards we had a series of special meetings at the High School in order to help the pupils in deciding to become Christians. We knew so many wished to take the step, but lacked courage. Towards the end of these meetings Rajonah seemed to understand better what it really meant to be a Christian, and he definitely made up his mind to give his heart to Jesus. A day or two passed and then he wrote me a beautiful letter, which is one of my most precious possessions. Here is a copy



Ny rany malabe
 yaho dia efa niovaova tsitika
 ka nitaba fa nitaba dia tsy
 nahalala ny hevity ny Kristian
 akory fa antekitry dia mba
 misaotra an' Andriamanitra fa
 mba nahalala. tsy na dia fa
 mahalaba aza aho dia mbola
 mangataka amin' Andriamanitra
 ihany ka mba hatra mpanara
 ka any Kristy tokoa tsy
 mba misaotra amaro ny
 Omandrony tokoa aho fa mba
 ngaha fo vaovao loy izao
 tsy ena aho Andriamanitra
 aho hita isika rehetra
 ka hotohina fo vaovao amin
 izao andro izao ka hatra
 mpanompy tokoa isika rehetra
 Ioy Rajonah Famakarao

RAJONAH'S LETTER.

of it for you to see. You must remember that Rajonah had only been learning a short time, so his writing is not very good; if you

knew Malagasy, you would see a number of mistakes in spelling. The people in his country do not speak the same dialect as those in Antananarivo, so it was not easy for him to write his letter.

This is the meaning :—

“ MY DEAR MOTHER,—

“ I have changed and I am not as I was before. Before I did not know anything about being a Christian, but now, thank God, I do know. But though I know something, I yet pray to God that I may indeed be a very true follower of Christ. And I do thank you, father and mother, very much, because I now have a new heart. May God bless us all, and give us new hearts that we may be true servants of His.

“ Says your boy,

“ RAJONAH.”

A few days after writing this beautiful letter little Rajonah was taken seriously ill, and before another week had passed Jesus had taken him to Himself. We were all so very sad for Rakotojohn, but yet we felt we dare not be selfish and wish Rajonah back in *our* Home, for had not the Lord Jesus taken him to the brighter Home in Heaven ?

Six hundred boys and young men from the High School, with their teachers, attended the funeral service, which was held in the church built with money from English children. The Rev. J. Pearse spoke from the suitable words : “ *It is well with the child.*” And we knew it was so ; the little heathen boy had lived with a Christian brother for about a year, and had been won to Jesus by his prayers and loving words.

I wonder how many big English brothers help their younger brothers in this way, and how many little ones are willing to be so nicely helped by those who wish to teach them !

ANDRIAMBOLA.—But before closing this chapter I must tell you a story of a Hova boy. The one I have chosen is one of the dearest Malagasy lads I know. His grandfather was a colonel in the army, and belonged to a high family. Unfortunately for Andriambola his father is a drunkard, and out of sheer pity we have taken the boy into the Home.

You have already heard that we have two collections a year in our High School for the native missionary society. You might think that a boy with no money need not trouble about such things. But Andriambola is not like that. He feels how happy his life has become through friends in England loving him, and he is very sorry for the poor Malagasy boys who have no



ANDRIAMBOLA.

school, no teacher, no Bible, no knowledge of a kind, loving Saviour. And so a fortnight before one of the collections was to be made, Andriambola began wondering how he could secure a little money. He came to talk the matter over with me, and I could easily see how much in earnest he was. It is not every English or Welsh boy even who begins getting ready for the missionary collection two

weeks before it is due. But I found out from Andriambola what a good plan it is, and I would recommend it to all my readers.

I cannot tell you how much I admired this Hova lad when turning to me, he said: "I should not like one of your pennies, madam, because it would be *your* money I should give and not mine. But I should like a penny of my very own, and I wish to know if you will kindly give me some work to do that I may earn one?" So I set Andriambola rather a hard task; I wanted to see if he were as good as he appeared to be, and I am glad to tell you he turned out even better. He spent many hours in removing a large quantity of soil from one part of the compound to another. On the day when the task was complete he came to tell me, with a face bright with delight, though covered with perspiration. Inquiring if the work was done, Andriambola replied: "Yes, madam, but——" (I wondered what was coming!) "But," said he, "I wish to know if you will allow me to do just as much again, that I may have *twopence* to give at the collection." How gladly I said "Yes" I will leave you to imagine.

But I have often thought of that *twopence*, and I believe that when it reached its destination the Lord Jesus would bless it, as even He cannot sometimes bless a £5 note. You see that twopence had cost something; it had meant real sacrifice, and it was *the very best* that that Hova boy could do for the missionary collection.

Can you guess what I am just wishing? That much as I love Malagasy boys, I should not like them to beat English and Welsh boys. You see, therefore, what great things I expect of you.

CHAPTER XIV

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP ?

THE Malagasy used to have some very funny ideas. For instance, when the rich people went to chapel they took with them a large number of slaves to do the singing. They thought it very improper for a well-to-do Malagasy to exert himself to sing ! Thus for many years the slaves had far more real pleasure in going to chapel than their masters and mistresses.

And yet English and Welsh people are just as queer in some respects. Many of them seem to think that the work amongst the heathen belongs to the missionary, and that like the Malagasy masters, they should simply *look on*. If only they knew how pleasant " the singing " is, how they would all want to help in some way ! Do you understand my little parable ?

* * *

But Malagasy have exceedingly pretty ways as well as funny ones. And I will tell you of one.

When their friends are undertaking a long journey they present a piece of money with which to buy food by the way. That looks as if they wish to help in keeping their friends well, that they may

return in safety. When the missionary is coming home to England for a change, the Malagasy, who love him very much, often present him and his wife with a gift of some kind, which they call a *blessing* . I have heard them say : " When your friends see this they will see how we love you, and so they will send you back to us."



MAP OF MADAGASCAR SHOWING BY MEANS OF SHADED LINES THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS COVERED THE ISLAND.

Last year when my husband and I left Madagascar, we received a beautiful present from the teachers and boys at the High School. I am not going to describe the handsome silk "*lamba*," but I want to tell you part of the speech made by one of the teachers at the presentation, which was made before the whole school. He said : " You know the pith of such-and-such a tree. When first removed it is hard and brittle, indeed it seems worthless. But the women breathe upon it over and over again, until at last it becomes soft and supple, and can be used in making baskets. Now this '*lamba*' is like the pith : in itself it is of no value whatsoever in expressing to you our

love—it is so insignificant—but we have *breathed our love* into it, and therefore we hope you will find it worthy of your acceptance.”

Do you know why I have told you this little story? Just this—I want you to “*breathe your love*” into all you do for Jesus, and then, though it be but a penny given to help a heathen boy or girl, it will be very precious in His sight.

* * * * *

I wonder if you remember that “Roll of Honour” with the names of four Welsh missionaries and their wives. The name of one was



MALAGASY WOMAN WEAVING A “LAMBA.”

David Johns. I want to tell you two little stories about him before I close this chapter, which is the last.

Once when David Johns lay very weak and ill in Mauritius, his wife tried to persuade him to give up the idea of returning to Mada-

gascar. Turning to her he said : " Mary, do not grieve me by talking like that ; if I had *a thousand lives to give, they should all be for Madagascar.*"

A few months later David Johns went to Nossi-bé, an island off the north-west coast of Madagascar. He had with him a faithful Malagasy servant, and he had gone back to Madagascar hoping to help the persecuted Christians. But soon he was again taken very ill with Malagasy fever, and shortly afterwards he died. Just before his death he suddenly sat up in bed, and in delirium cried out to his servant : " See, see ! there is a boat on the beach ; it is full of Malagasy ; they are sinking ; what can we do to help them ? "

Dear boys and girls, one word before we say " Good-bye." You know a little now about the needs of the Malagasy. Thousands are, as it were, sinking. Will you not think what *you* can do to help them ? And when you are grown up I hope we shall have from Wales and from England brave men and women who, like David Johns, will gladly say : "*Had I a thousand lives to give, they should all be for Madagascar.*"

THE END.





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